University of Alberta

"Stories to Live By": A Narrative Inquiry into Five Teachers' Shifting Identities Through the Borderlands of Cross-Cultural Professional Development

by

Carla Dawn Nelson ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Elementary Education

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring 2003

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Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

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Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *"Stories to Live By": A Narrative Inquiry into Five Teachers' Shifting Identities Through the Borderlands of Cross-Cultural Professional Development* submitted by Carla Dawn Nelson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

The study is a narrative inquiry into how our experiences shift our identities as persons and as teachers. Five teachers – Ken, Dana, Larry, Wendy and myself, Carla,

narratively examined how our identities shifted because of the experiences we had through our involvement in a professional development program in Kenya. The study is not about being in Kenya, nor about the amazing Kenyan teachers with whom we had the privilege of working. The purpose of the study is for us to come to understand how our experiences in Kenya, what I am calling the borderlands, have shaped our ever-evolving teacher identities.

Narrative educational research is associated with, among others, the work of D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly (1986, 1988, 1991, 1995, 1998, 2000). Their research understands teacher identities as 'stories to live by,' stories of how we are in our worlds which are created and recreated through the experiences we have (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). Based on this fundamental position, Connelly and Clandinin advocate that teacher development be one of reconstruction. It is a process of telling and retelling our educative experiences, of composing and recomposing our embodied knowledge, for the purpose of creating meaning of life's experiences. We thereby become confident in the resource that is ourselves as we facilitate the meaning-making process for our students in our classrooms (1999b).

The contributions to the thought and practice of teacher education I hope to make as a result of this study are three-fold. First, I desire to witness the change process narratively. Second, I hope that the attention I give to the identities of the five of us will highlight the need for teacher education programs and development opportunities to include and even esteem teacher identity formation components and emphases. And lastly, I also hope that those reading the study will be encouraged either to begin or to continue to think about how their own 'stories to live by' are shaped by and are shaping their unique life experiences and how it is that these stories are being told and retold, lived and relived, in their classrooms every day.

PREFACE

TO BUILD A SWING

You carry
All the ingredients
To turn your life into a nightmare –
Don't mix them!

You have all the genius
To build a swing in your backyard
For God.

That sounds
Like a lot more fun.
Let's start laughing, drawing blueprints,
Gathering our talented friends.

I will help you
With my divine lyre and drum.

Hafiz
Will sing a thousand words
You can take into your hands,
Like golden saws,
Silver hammers,

Polished teakwood,
Strong silk rope.

You carry all the ingredients
To turn your existence into joy,

Mix them, mix
Them!

The Gift
Poems by Hafiz,
The Great Sufi Master

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge …

Jean – who navigated with wisdom, encouragement, intrigue and delight …

André and Mary Ann – who contributed much clarity …

Linda, Maryanne and Bernie – who willingly entered in …

The community at the Centre in Edmonton – who came to the table with honest wonder ...

The community at the Centre at OISE – who welcomed a stranger's questions ...

Paula and Gwen – who kept the details easy and the life stuff in focus ...

Paddy, Norah, Brad, Gord, Bruce, Brian, Jane, Craig, Barb, Janet, Ron, Gail, Don, Mitzi, Tracey, Norma, Karen, Jeff, Larry, Kim, Tim, Rick, and my other colleagues – who believed I had something to offer …

Anne and Peg, Tana, Caryn, Dana and Tracy – who always provided home …

Stacy and Phil – who are such joy ...

Bertha and Arnold, Carol and John – who always find reason to celebrate ...

The teachers in the Kenya program – who honour learning and teaching ...

The partners of the Kenya project – who risk to make the world better ...

Jo-Ann, Grant, Lou and Daniel – who shared their companions ...

Ken, Dana, Larry and Wendy – who shared their lives ...

and Gary – who is my companion, my beloved, and with whom I have the privilege of learning, growing, changing, laughing – of sharing all of life.

I am so grateful to all of you for accompanying me in this adventure.
Thank you.

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Chapter One:
INTRODUCTION

I have had the opportunity to visit Kenya several times. This study is the story of one of those times, and it is more than this. It is an inquiry into how the experiences we (four other teachers and I) encountered during a professional development opportunity in Kenya shifted our identities as people and as teachers.

New experiences create spaces that I am coming to know as the borderlands. My times in Kenya have helped me to recognize the existence of these spaces in a way that other life and teaching experiences have not. These spaces do certainly exist on our home landscapes, even within the classrooms where we live and work every day. I am not therefore suggesting that these spaces only exist or emerge when I am on a foreign landscape, but there is something about being in a completely different context that heightens my attentiveness. I become more aware of the boundaries, the inclusionary and exclusionary lines, with which I engage my world and by which I define myself. I come to be more alert to the person I am, the values I hold, the beliefs I trust and the stories I tell.

This study narratively illustrates how experiences in the borderlands can shift who we are in our worlds. In this brief introduction, I introduce the five Canadian teacher participants and the metaphor of the borderlands. Then, after an orientation in Chapter Two that serves to create the context by presenting relevant research on identity formation and on the concept of the borderlands, and, after an explanation of my decision to use narrative inquiry as the methodology in Chapter Three, I present 'stories to live by' – stories of the identities of the five of us who will encounter 'stories from the borderlands.' 'Stories from the borderlands' are stories which serve as 'disruption and essential counterpoint' (Steedman, 1986, p. 22) to our 'stories to live by.' They are the stories of the moments of disruption we encountered during our time away. In Chapter Six, after our return to our home landscapes, I retell our 'stories to live by' in light of the 'stories from the borderlands,' highlighting the shifts that have occurred in who we are in our worlds. I conclude the dissertation in Chapter Seven by discussing the significance of a narrative contribution to the study of identity formation and the importance of attention to teacher identity formation in both pre-service and in-service teacher education.

We, the five teacher participants in the study, have never taught together in the same school but know one another through involvement in connected church communities. Ken is currently a high school teacher in the areas of Social Studies and Ethics at a Christian alternative public high school. He holds a doctorate in Educational Foundations, is an author of textbooks, and has had numerous teaching assignments in other public high schools and institutions of higher education. Dana has over twelve years of teaching experience in public schools and specializes in Special Education. She holds a Master degree in Educational Psychology and has published numerous educational resources for her school district. After a full career of teaching, Larry retired

from the profession during the course of this study. His experiences are varied and numerous: He has taught every grade, has served as an administrator, has two degrees (one in Education and another in Arts), holds a Certificate in International Politics and Political Sociology from the London School of Economics, and has taught at the college level as well. Wendy has taught public elementary school for more than twenty years in three Canadian provinces. She holds graduate diplomas in Children's Literature and in Teacher Librarianship. And I, Carla, have been a teacher and guidance counsellor in both public and private schools for sixteen years. I am a chartered psychologist in the province of Alberta and have Masters degrees in Educational Psychology and in Divinity. Together, the five of us committed ourselves to learning about our identities as we entered into the borderlands learning alongside one another and our Kenyan colleagues.

Becoming more alert to the identities we hold, is what, many say, travelling does – it can open up one's own perception of the world and one's self for reexamination and therefore, for reconstruction. It brings you face to face with who you are. Travelling in the borderlands does this in a profound way. Lugones (1987) observes that for outsiders to the mainstream, "'world' –travelling" is not a luxury, it is compulsory. People who find themselves excluded by the dominant culture for whichever of numerous power-ridden reasons, travel to other 'worlds' out of necessity (p. 3). Because of the hostility of these 'worlds' and the compulsory nature of the 'travelling,' the enormous value of "this practice as a skillful, creative, rich, enriching and, given certain circumstances, as a loving way of being and living" has been obscured (p. 3). 'World' -travellers therefore originate from many places be they places on the inside or on the outside of the mainstream. But all are engaged in a "willful exercise" that brings about shifts in where and how one draws the line: "the shift from being one person to being a different person is what I call 'travel'" (p. 11).

On the one hand, travelling in the borderlands is not quite the same as travelling to and from different 'worlds' as defined by Lugones. 'World' –travelling has a sense of destination but borderland–travelling happens in the space before one gets to the destination. It is the space wherein the traveller, having left the familiar, tries to figure out which direction he or she might next choose to navigate. It is the space in between which has been created by the recognition of difference, the recognition that my present identity has not yet been allowed but is about to be formed by this new encounter.

On the other hand, both 'world' and 'borderland' travel have the potential to shift someone "from being one person to being a different person" (Lugones, 1987, p. 11). Learning to navigate in both of these spaces requires the same two key ingredients – imagination and curiosity. As our 'stories to live by' – the stories of our identities, are read, the way the five of us use our imaginations is easily recognized as we anticipate the kinds of teachers we wish to become and the kind of impact we wish to have on our students, colleagues and schools. Greene (1995) proposes that it is through imagination that we can conceive of something different. She is reminded of Jean-Paul Sartre's declaration that

> 'it is on the day that we can conceive of a different state of affairs that a new light falls on our troubles and our suffering and then we *decide* that these are unbearable.' That is, we acknowledge the harshness of situations only when we have in mind another state of affairs in which things would be better (p. 5).

Approaching our worlds with curiosity comes more easily to some of the five of us than it does to the others but it too is easily recognized as our 'stories to live by' are considered. Dewey (1938a) recognizes curiosity as a key ingredient in experiences that promote shifts in who we are. In fact, Dewey's understanding of experience is much more than simply an event. He conceives of experience as "a moving force" grounded in situation, rooted in interaction and connected to the entire unity of one's life.

> [I]f an experience arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future, continuity works in a very different way [a way which does not limit later capacity for growth]. Every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into (p. 38).

The borderlands of this inquiry have emerged because of the opportunity for the five of us to travel to Kenya in order to participate in a professional development project with in-service Kenyan teachers. Our assignment, according to the partner institutions which support the project, was to plan and prepare, in learning manual and collegial discussion formats, two five day courses for 38 Kenyan teachers – one on the 'Theological Foundations of Education' and the other on 'Instructional Strategies and Classroom Management.' Our discovery in this process was the borderlands, events that interrupted the continuity of our self-understanding. They became apparent because of our curious and imaginative desire to reflect on and learn about our own situatedness as professional teachers and as persons still composing and authoring the stories of our lives.

This inquiry into the borderlands is therefore for us. We want to become teachers who are open to the shifts that are possible in the borderlands so that we might become more of who we are and, then and therefore, more in our relationships with our students and our colleagues as well. It is a study into how we navigate the borders of ourselves, of our own identities. It began with the preparation to cross the literal borders of Canada. In addition, however, we crossed the borders of both our in- and out-of-classroom places and left our school landscapes entirely for a time. We crossed religious, cultural and social borders. We went as colleagues, fellow learners and resource personnel as well as outsiders, strangers and persons of privilege. We were given the possibility of "'seeing [our]selves seeing' rather than being told how to see" (Vinz, 1996, p. 123). And then we returned to our Canadian landscapes. With us we brought stories that have the potential to shape how we might renegotiate the borders of ourselves. I offer these stories of ourselves and stories from the borderlands because they serve as "disruption and essential counterpoint" (Steedman, 1986, p. 22) in the development of our teacher lives.

And, because I believe that the greatest resource in every classroom is the person that the teacher is – this investigation is also for the reader, for you. It is my hope that through reading this study, you might begin to recognize the borderlands you encounter every day and enter in with imagination and curiosity as to how these experiences have the potential to shift who you are in your world as well. Please consider this your invitation.

Wednesday is market day in Mitaboni, Kenya. The empty yard in the center of town fills up with people and goods. Older women spread their colourful cotton wraps called lasos that also serve as aprons, dresses and baby slings, on the ground to mark the dimensions of their shop. With exact precision, tomatoes, papayas, avocadoes and bananas are mounted in pyramids and the women imbibe in the luxury of sneaking a corner of the cloth on which to sit and rest. Young men, confident in their business savvy, pay a little to use one of the official stands. Tree limbs, about three or four inches in diameter, are tied together to frame the plastic walls and to anchor the twine on which the latest North American discard clothing hangs. The older men and the children gravitate to the field on the town's edge. That is where the cows, goats and chickens are sold. Are the little boy's tears because he is about to lose his pet goat? Do Kenyan children have this luxury? School aged boys and girls wander about in their ill-fitting school uniforms, drinking a soda and standing in the entrances to stores – a universal teenage perch from which to view the world. And the young women? The young women are the ones buying the week's supplies for their families.

At noonday in Mitaboni, the sun shines straight down. I am reminded of the folk tale in which the sun was triumphant over the wind in successfully getting the traveller to take off his cloak. The sweater and tights I needed to start the day seem as distant as last winter. The intense heat and the dry ground fool me into thinking that Mitaboni may have an untapped resource of fairy dust. Ken, Larry and I were not just out for a walk on that second Wednesday of our time with the Kenyan teachers. We were on a mission. Last Wednesday, Dana had discovered a treasure in one of the used clothing stands and we were determined to find it. Not knowing how to explain it to a salesman whose English most likely consisted of 'How are you?', I chose to smile my way in, stand in one spot and look around at the blouses, sweaters, T-shirts, skirts and pants that, two months ago, were shipped to Kenya from the Goodwill centers of North America. Larry seemed intrigued with the people and the colours, treasures of another kind. Ken did his best to enlist the shopkeepers' help by describing as best he could, a green T-shirt on which the words written were, 'Saskatchewan Roughriders – Grey Cup Champions.'

Our hunt was unsuccessful and feeling as though we had lost the big game, we headed back for class. Nearly half way down the dusty lane, we met a woman and an elderly man coming toward us. How ought I greet strangers in an unfamiliar country? Should I attempt to catch their eyes or is it better to avert my own? My internal paralysis was interrupted with Ken's decisive and friendly, 'habari' (hello, literally, 'how is your news?'). The elderly gentleman smiled a wide toothless smile and extended his hand to Ken. He had heard that there were some wazungu (white people, literally, 'ones who spin around') in town and, that they were interested in purchasing some land.

How was it that this man came to presume that we were interested in purchasing some land? On that particular day, we were interested in purchasing a used T-shirt, not a piece of property. And on all the days that we were in Mitaboni, we were there to be with teacher colleagues – to learn and to converse together. But this is not who we were to this man. To him, we were probably accomplices in what he had come to intuitively know as the white persons' Africa. Western Europeans have, as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o describes, used Africa in three ways – to hunt after profit, to hunt after pleasure and to promote both (1993, p. 132). That day, I just wanted to buy a T-shirt. I thought my identity was simply as that of a guest consumer, a stranger contributing to a community's economy. But that day, in that place, because of that experience, I also became aware of identities I did not know I had.

The man was quite eager to let us know the benefits of such an investment. When Ken asked him the price, the man responded with an invitation to take a walk and chat about it for a while. Did we see in that toothless wizened man a devious realtor pouncing on the opportunity to seal the deal, to make a profit? Were we being flippant? Were we responding like we did to the hawkers in the market selling poorly carved salad tongs?; to the boys in the street offering a shoe shine?; to the squeegee kids on the corner selling a windshield wipe?

The invitation to consider purchasing his property could have been the most significant, most drastic, most risk-filled proposal he had ever made to anyone. In Kenyan culture, land is the most prized inheritance that a father can give to a son. He wanted to take a walk – to perhaps tell us his story, to let us know just how precious and how difficult the decision to sell the land was. By offering us this land, this man was, in effect, offering us his historical and future connection with his ancestral family. He was offering us his identity. And we asked, 'how much?'.

On our way back to class, we laughed – about what our spouses would think of us buying a piece of land in Mitaboni, about how news of the presence of white people gets around town, about what the others would say about the really big treasure we found at the market. And then we were quiet – repentantly silent. Whose heritages and how many identities have been purchased at markets over the years? Which of my identities might I put up for sale? Out of which of my identities might I make this decision?

What was it in that moment that caused us to reflect? Perhaps it was the internal disruption that meeting had caused. It functioned like a counterpoint to who we had come to know ourselves to be. It was a space that was created by our reflection, by our willingness to explore another possibility, by our recognition that maybe we could see our world and ourselves differently, that maybe we needed to. That moment was a space that I am coming to know as the borderlands.

Chapter Two:
ORIENTATION

Perspectives on Identity Formation

The theoretical puzzle within which this study is situated is that of the one posed by Connelly and Clandinin (1999). They suggest that our identities are composed and improvised as we go about the living of our lives embodying knowledge and engaging our contexts (p. 4). Our 'stories to live by' are the narrative expressions of how we are in our worlds. They "take shape as life unfolds" and "may, as narrative constructions are wont to do, solidify into a fixed entity, an unchanging narrative construction, or they may continue to grow and change" (p. 95). The study is situated within this puzzle and the study demonstrates that our experiences do have the educative power to shift our identities. Experience can solidify or reinforce, alter or expand who we are in our worlds.

A narrative understanding of identity formation is one that is gaining recognition in the social science field. More commonly held perspectives are those offered by psychology and more critically based perspectives are those offered by cultural studies. The discipline of theology has an influential perspective as well. For the purpose of establishing a context into which the contributions of a narrative understanding of identity formation can be offered, I propose the following brief overview of the understandings of identity formation that are offered by various social science disciplines highlighting the intersections of these perspectives with a narrative understanding.

Psychological Perspectives:

Many psychologists offer an understanding that considers the central core of self as progressing through stages of development. Freud (1927/1962) considered the child's self entity as developing through the same stages as that of human society. Erikson (1950) understood identity as a process the self engaged as it interacted with various aspects of culture. Gilligan (1982) calls for the recognition that identity is developed in context through relationship, an understanding that is critical to recognizing the gendered nature of identity. Developmental theorists also consider the core self as an entity progressing through stages of change as the individual gains more insight and encounters more dimensions of the world. Kegan (1982) is one such theorist. He offers a constructive-developmental framework in which the person is the source of his or her own potential for growth. He describes this process in terms of stages of meaning-making which help us understand the fundamental context of development. The essence of identity is located in the evolution of persons as they continue the meaning-making process.

One psychologist who has come to recognize that a narrative understanding of identity forms the basis of the practical work of psychology is Donald Polkinghorne.

Writing out of his belief that the solutions to human problems will not come from developing even more sophisticated and creative applications of psychology's natural science foundation, he promotes "the importance of having research strategies that can work with the narratives people use to understand the human world" (1988, pp. x, xi). Much of Polkinghorne's message is to reconnect the study of psychology with its early interest in self-theory and life stories as the basis for understanding life development and personal identity. His historical treatment of psychology's founding theories brings him to conclude:

> The human disciplines had only peripheral interest in the study of narrative before the 1960s debates in history about the nature of narrative explanation. In the 1970s, literary criticism came to the fore with its interest in structure and communication theory. With the 1980s, psychology along with other human sciences, has begun to turn its attention to narrative. Psychological studies are taking place in the context of a general interest in cognitive contributions to the construction of experiences. Narrative is the primary scheme by which human beings take form. Thus, in the understanding of human existence – both individual lives and organizational 'lives' – narrative has a central role. The human sciences (the behavioral and social sciences), with their tradition of quantitative research, are not yet comfortable with dealing directly with the linguistic rationality by which narrative operates. However, for the human sciences to gain a full appreciation and comprehension of human experience and behavior, narrative approaches will be required (p. 123).

Polkinghorne (1988) does address the specific question of understanding personal identity by offering a thorough overview of the philosophical foundations of psychology's perspective over its history as a social science. The following position is the one Polkinghorne promotes:

> [W]e achieve our personal identities and self concept through the use of the narrative configuration, and make our existence into a whole by understanding it as an expression of a single unfolding and developing story. We are in the middle of our stories and cannot be sure how they will end; we are constantly having to revise the plot as new events are added to our lives. Self, then, is not a static thing nor a substance, but a configuring of personal events into a historical unity which includes not only what one has been but also anticipations of what one will be (p. 150).

Theological Perspectives:

The discipline of Christian theology has typically understood the self as a created entity. Created by God for His companionship at the declaration of His word, persons had life breathed in and the soul was made in His image. This entity was established and it was declared to be good. It was also established and declared good with the intent of change and growth, the intent to continue to be created, to become and to develop into the

fullness of the intended creation. Persons, therefore, are created beings with the innate ability to continue the process of becoming in the context of relationship – relationship with God, with others and with the world around them. Identity is and is becoming: it is the same and it is continuing. Christopher Bryant (1983), in writing about how the psychology of Carl Jung contributes to a Christian perspective of the self, summarizes this understanding when he states that the "Christian life can be understood as the progressive restoration of the lost likeness" (p. 91). The self is a unique rendering, an echo of sorts, of a single story.

Several theologians express the significance of narrative for theology and ethics. Stephen Crites is a theologian who's thinking represents, according to McKim, (1994), one of three main ways narrative perspectives intersect with Christian study. Crites (1971) is a proponent of the perspective that argues that the formal quality of experience through time is inherently narrative. The other two models are, first, an approach in which human experience is perceived as having a religious dimension, a dimension that is revealed through the stories people tell about themselves and those that help structure their worlds. And second, is an approach that focuses specifically on the narrative texts in Scripture seeking to answer how these texts function as instruction in the life of Christians and Christian communities. For the overall study of theology,

> narrative is neither just an account of genre criticism nor a faddish appeal to the importance of telling stories; rather it is a crucial conceptual category for such matters as understanding issues of epistemology and methods of argument, depicting personal identity, and displaying the content of Christian convictions (Hauerwas & Jones, 1997, p. 5).

Crites understands our identities as being "fundamental narrative forms" which he calls "sacred stories" (1971, p. 295).

> Such stories, and the symbolic worlds they project, are not like monuments that men behold, but like dwelling-places. People live in them. Yet even though they are not directly told, even though a culture seems rather to be the telling than the teller of these stories, their form seems to be narrative. They are moving forms, at once musical and narrative, which inform people's sense of the story of which their own lives are a part, of the moving course of their own action and experience.
>
> I propose, with some misgivings, to call these fundamental narrative forms sacred stories, not so much because gods are commonly celebrated in them, but because men's sense of self and world is created through them. … For these are stories that orient the life of people through time, their life-time, their individual and corporate experience and their sense of style, to the great powers that establish the reality of their world. So I call them sacred stories, which in their secondary, written expressions may carry the authority of scripture for the people who understand their own stories in relation to them (p. 295).

People "awaken" to a sacred story. They do not "sit down on a cool afternoon and think themselves up a sacred story" (Crites, 1971, p. 296). Sacred stories can attempt to be named through the living of our "mundane" stories – the stories that we live in our worlds, the stories we recall through memory, and the stories we anticipate yet to live. All mundane stories are implicit in a sacred story, and every mundane story takes soundings in the sacred story" (p. 296). Sacred stories find expression in the telling and living of our mundane stories over time.

> Our sense of personal identity depends upon the continuity of experience through time, a continuity bridging even the cleft between remembered past and projected future. Even when it is largely implicit, not vividly self-conscious, our sense of ourselves is at every moment to some extent integrated into a single story (p. 302).

Alasdair MacIntyre is a philosophical ethicist who recognizes that the concept of selfhood is "a concept of a self whose unity resides in the unity of a narrative which links birth to life to death as narrative beginning to middle to end" (1981, p. 191).

> I am forever whatever I have been at any time for others – and I may at anytime be called upon to answer for it – no matter how changed I may be now. There is no way of *founding* my identity – or lack of it – on the psychological continuity or discontinuity of the self. The self inhabits a character whose unity is given as the unity of a character. …
>
> What the narrative concept of selfhood requires is thus twofold. On the one hand, I am what I may justifiably be taken by others to be in the course of living out a story that runs from my birth to my death; I am the *subject* of a history that is my own and no one else's, that has its own peculiar meaning. …
>
> The other aspect of narrative selfhood is correlative: I am not only accountable. I am one who can always ask others for an account, who can put others to the question. I am part of their story, as they are part of mine. The narrative of any one life is part of an interlocking set of narratives (pp. 202, 203).

Other Perspectives:

Other disciplines of the social sciences offer a range of perspectives from narrative inklings to narrative treatises in their proposed understanding of identity. I do not purport to be an expert in any of these fields but I do admit my intrigue with their renderings.

Symbolic interactionism is key to the sociological understanding of the self. Based on the writing of George Mead (1934), the self is a distinctively human capacity that enables people to reflect on their nature and the social world through communication and language. Identity is socially bestowed, socially sustained and socially transformed (Berger, 1963): It is impacted by the external forces of power as evidenced in political systems.

Some social theorists (Keating, 1996) speak of "threshold identities," identities which challenge us to "rethink the dominant culture's sociopolitical inscriptions – the labels that define each person according to gender, ethnicity, sexuality, class, and other systems of difference" (p. 5): "[I]ndividual identity formation is mixed with collective cultural change" (p. 15). Other social theorists speak of the deeply formative role of language and culture in the making of identity. Kerby (1991) roots his understanding in Heidegger who espoused that language is the house of being. Persons, Kerby (1991) says, only know themselves after the fact of expression. Identity is anchored in the various forms of narrative emplotment that make our lives and it is through the unity of these lived experiences, not from the analysis of component parts, that meaning is attained. Identity is the identity of which I can become conscious at any given time.

Historian David Carr (1986) puts identity in the context of a life lived. The parts and the whole of our lives are never complete because we are always in the midst. The whole can only be seen from the particular perspective of one of the parts. The parts flow together in coherence creating the possibility of living authentically, living a life in which the person can choose the story he or she wishes to play engaging relationships and reflection along the way.

Mary Catherine Bateson (1989), a cultural anthropologist, echoes this same understanding. She speaks of inventing, not discovering, ourselves through recognizing the constant improvisation of our "composing" selves as we find our paths and purposes, reimagining the future and reinterpreting the past.

Critical theorists also advocate a constructivist understanding of identity: All identity is constructed across difference, through encounters with the other. Hall (1987/1996) writes:

> It may be true that the self is always, in a sense, a fiction, just as the kinds of 'closures' which are required to create communities of identification – nation, ethnic group, families, sexualities, etc. – are arbitrary closures; and the forms of political action, whether movement, parties, or classes, those too, are temporary, partial, arbitrary. I believe that it is an immensely important gain when one recognizes that all identity is constructed across difference and begins to live with the politics of difference (p. 117).

Their theories of difference, and especially those of black women writers, bring to awareness crucial aspects of identity:

> … the recognition of a self that is multiplicitous, not unitary; the recognition that differences are always relational rather than inherent; and the recognition that wholeness and commonality are acts of will and creativity, rather than passive discovery (Harris, 1990, p. 608).

In their attempts to bring about a more just and democratic society, critical theorists pay particular attention to the development of minority identities which are "defined in the context of inter- and intra-group conflicts, encounters, and struggles between minorities and dominant white groups on the ideological terrain of education" (McCarthy, 1993, p. 290). As such, "minority cultural identities are not fixed or monolithic but multivocal, and even contradictory" (p. 290).

Those theorists involved in the broad, even "anti-disciplinary" (Nelson, Treichler, & Grossberg, 1992, p. 1), field of cultural studies recognize that identity is one of the words in the conceptual vocabulary of contemporary cultural analysis that has been the most "flagrantly contested" and "thoroughly abused" (Gilroy, 1996, p. 224). Its potential problems and possible pleasures "can send the aspirant practitioners of cultural studies scuttling back toward the quieter sanctuaries of their old disciplinary affiliations" (p. 224).

> Anthropologists utter sighs of relief; psychologists rub their hands with glee; philosophers relax, confident that their trials are over; sociologists mutter discontentedly about the illegitimate encroachments of postmodernism while literary critics look blank and perplexed. Historians remain silent (p. 224).

It is in safe places such as these where "[e]ssential difference – or the belief in stable unchanging identities and permanent divisions between ourselves and others – provides a certain level of comfort and control" (Keating, 1996, p. 64). Here, we can rest assured in our definitions of a stable identity and we can by-pass the need for self-reflection and change. Or, we can go outside of our definitions and recognize the centrality of the concept of identity to each of the above mentioned disciplines. This then highlights the significance of this concept's "bridging qualities" and, because of this, it can function as "a junction or hinge concept that can help to maintain the connective tissue that articulates political and cultural concerns" (Gilroy, 1996, p. 225).

Borderlands Defined

The borderlands is a space a person enters when one boundary has been crossed and before a new boundary is encountered or created. It is a space that exists in between where one encounters something – an event, a person, a sight, etc., that interrupts and dislocates how we have come to be in our worlds. It is a metaphorical place, of course, but one that is emerging from the educational literature on teachers as border crossers. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) and Giroux (1992a) all have had much to offer to this discussion. Before summarizing their contributions, I wish to present the foundations of the metaphor as offered by Schutz and Luckmann (1983/1989) and Anzaldúa (1987/1999) by way of introduction.

In the early seventies, Schutz and Luckmann (1973/1973) proposed the concept of the "life-world" as a way of understanding a reality that is lived, experienced, and endured. They suggested that the every day life-world is a world which people engage by

acting, and change by their actions. It was not however until their second volume was published ten years later (1983/1989) that they introduced the idea of the boundary crossings that occur as people engage their world. Individuals' engagement of their life-worlds often calls for the need to transcend the limitations of their experience, be they the "small" transcendencies that constitute the objective world, the "medium" transcendencies that pair individuals through common experiences, or "great" transcendencies that arise from encounters with other states of consciousness. Boundaries are a real part of that life-world which

> are crossed in memory and project; that in understanding and communication bridges are thrown across to the Other person's alienness, that the dissimilarity of realities outside everyday life is made more evident by the interpretation of the memories and indications that are brought back from there to the 'normal' wide-awake state... (1983/1989, p. 131).

Anzaldúa's (1987/1999) work is highly autobiographical. In it, she documents life in a specific locale, on the border of the United States (Texas) and Mexico, a border created by political power that she has had to continuously navigate. But it is more than political borders that must be addressed. Psychological, sexual and spiritual borders are "present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy" (p. 19). She refers to this place where borders are encountered as the borderlands, places wherein she encounters on-going resistance to the oppression for being a woman of a minority race, ethnicity and culture, wherein the convergence of dissimilar peoples can occur. Her attention to her process of resistance led her to identify the need for the creation of a new identity, a new "mestiza," which can be known only in the borderlands.

The borderlands are places of struggle, a struggle that transforms the "I" self into a relational one. They are risky places "where conflicting values, ideas, and beliefs converge, unsettling fixed categories of meaning" (Keating, 1996, p. 2). Here, insiders – permanent members of single, unitary groups, are challenged "to reexamine the exclusionary terms used to define their own personal and social locations" whether or not these locations were entered by virtue of birth or by choice (Keating, 1996, pp. 2, 3). The depth of Anzaldúa's personal struggles with borders deserves much greater attention. Even so, I briefly present her contribution because she is one of the first to use the metaphor of borderlands and because she continues to work to increase understanding between cultures. She explains:

> I write for more of an international audience that came across from one world to the other and that has border people. Actually, more and more people today become border people because the pace of society has increased. Just think about multi-media, computers and World Wide Web, for example.... We are all living in a society where these borders are transgressed constantly (1987/1999, p. 233).

Whelan *in relation with* Huber (2000) recognizes that Anzaldúa's (1987/1999) work is one of several thoughtful writers who are struggling to understand the landscapes of the borderlands, "the spaces which exist 'in-between'" (p. 79). They provide the following helpful summary and overview of the insights these writers offer to help our understanding of "[t]hese grey areas which emerge at the crossing places of shadow and light, of difference" (p. 79):

> Anzaldúa (1987) calls these spaces borderlands where people of diverse cultures meet in dialogue to create new traditions; for Greene (1995), they are places of imaginative possibility where diverse others can appear more fully before one another; Bateson (1989) thinks of them as meeting places at the edges where lines are blurred, allowing new vision, creativity, and imagination to emerge; for Trinh (1989) and Silko (1996), they are places of community and shared storytelling where ambiguity, tension, and contradiction are invited; Nelson (1995) refers to them as chosen communities where counterstories which disrupt the dominant narrative can thrive; for hooks (1990) they are places of understanding where the center and the margin are a part of a larger whole; for Buber (in Friedman, 1991, p. x) they are the narrow ridges where there is 'certainty of meeting what remains undisclosed;' for Clandinin and Connelly (1995) they are educative spaces where the expression of the desires for storytelling, relationship, and reflection can live (p. 79).

In addition to Whelan/Huber's comment, Connelly and Clandinin (1999) also suggest that crossing the borders into the borderlands is a central dynamic on the educational landscape. Picking up on the distinction between out-of-classroom places and in-classroom places on teachers' professional knowledge landscapes, teachers are considered as ones who must cross these spatial borders numerous times in one day.

> Borders mark the dividing places. Borders say that something different is about to begin. Things pass across the border and different things happen to them. Different things are important on different sides of the border. Things get across the border in different ways. There is a history to everything that happens on each side of the border. Borders themselves have histories. These are ways that permit things to pass the border and ways that things are treated on either side of the border (p. 104).

Borders of time also exist on the educational landscape. The rhythms of the school day punctuated by the ringing of the bells and the school year by seasonal and evaluative events create temporal borders that should, at first consideration, seem easy to cross. If, however, one considers a teacher's knowledge as personal and practical, one can begin to develop a sense of the difficulties teachers may encounter when confronted with changes to the professional knowledge landscape.

In addition to borders of space and borders of time, borders of relationship are also central to teachers' continuously forming identity. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) refer to teacher identities as 'stories to live by.' These stories are lived out, told and

retold on the landscapes in which we live our lives. As the experiences of our lives take us to various borderlands, our 'stories to live by' become threaded with the new stories of the experiences we encounter therein.

> *Identity* is a term that tends to carry a burden of hard reality, something like a rock, a forest, an entity. Being true to this identity, being true to oneself, is often thought to be a virtue. Yet, from the narrative point of view, identities have histories. They are narrative constructions that take shape as life unfolds and that may, as narrative constructions are wont to do, solidify into a fixed entity, an unchanging narrative construction, or they may continue to grow and change. ... The identities we have, the stories we live by, tend to show different facets depending on the situations in which we find ourselves. This is no less true for teachers in their professional knowledge landscapes. Different facets, different identities, can show up, be reshaped and take on new life in different landscape settings. Both sides of this general picture are true in some measure: identities, the stories we live by, are, it would seem, not easily changed, so difficult, at times, it may appear that they are, indeed, fixed unchanging entities. But, ..., identities both have origins and change (pp. 94, 95).

Connelly and Clandinin, then, offer an understanding of the spatial, temporal and relational borders which need crossing. Giroux's work offers an additional dimension to the metaphor – that of contextual borders, the borders erected by the values of society (1992a). Giroux's work is situated in critical theory and is aimed at engaging teachers to transform pedagogical practice. One aspect of his call for teachers to become border crossers is a call to recognize that we live in a community of others who must be recognized and valued "in its own terms, and to further create borderlands in which diverse cultural resources allow for the fashioning of new identities within existing configurations of power" (p. 28). When teachers cross contextual borders, they come to understand the fragility of identity as it crisscrosses histories, languages, experiences and voices. "Such borderlands should be seen as sites for both critical analysis and as a potential source of experimentation, creativity, and possibility" (Giroux, 1992b, p. 209).

The call to become a border crosser then has a radical implication. Yes, teachers are requested to recognize the existing configurations of power that typically distinguish otherness along lines of visible and quantifiable difference (i.e. race, class and gender). Said (1991/1993) wants all to recognize the epistemology of imperialism which has given rise to a separation between people as members of homogenous races and exclusive nations and which has at its core "the supremely stubborn thesis that everyone is principally and irreducibly a member of some race or category and that that race or category cannot ever be assimilated to or accepted by others" (p. 308).

And, yes, they are called to learn about others. Delpit (1995) calls teachers to look again:

> We educators set out to teach, but how can we reach the worlds of others when we don't even know they exist? Indeed, many of us don't even realize that our

> own worlds exist only in our heads and in the cultural institutions we have built to support them (p. xiv).

And, yes, teachers are challenged to redirect their energy. Lorde (1984) recognizes that

> [t]oo often we pour the energy needed for recognizing and exploring difference into pretending those differences are insurmountable barriers, or that they do not exist at all. This results in a voluntary isolation, or false and treacherous connections. Either way, we do not develop tools for using human difference as a springboard for creative change within our lives (pp. 115, 116).

And, yes, teachers are called to work towards change, to re-negotiate the very borders they encounter day by day. A first step in this process is to allow for a new dialogue, a dialogue in a language in which one speaks with rather than exclusively for others. Being a border crosser, according to Giroux (1992a), is about educators repositioning themselves against the dominant culture in order to reconstitute their own identities and experiences and those of their students. They recognize that they are products of history and that they can be producers of the future creation of a more democratic world, a world in which the social formations, political communities, and social practices are regulated by the borders of social justice and equality. Pinar (1988) considers this emancipatory aim common to both critical and narrative approaches to curriculum studies.

But teachers are also encouraged to do something more. They are encouraged to recognize the wholeness of encounter when one enters the borderlands, an experience that necessitates that they first bring themselves, their identities. They are called to inquire about life in the borderlands – be that on their school landscapes or in their classrooms or in a completely new context, holistically. They are to approach them as independent entities, "treated in terms of the personal and social lives of its participants set in a storied, historical, social context" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994, p. 1318).

Becoming a border crosser teacher therefore means that the teacher chooses to learn about self and other. Learning about ourselves as people who are continually in the making by the experiences we encounter is the first step in learning to connect with others in our classrooms and in our world who too have the possibility to change.

Bateson (2000) proposes a way in which this can be done. She suggests that this learning about self and about others begins with this same approach of curiosity, imagination and respect. It is about seeking the familiar in the strange and the strange in familiar. She also suggests that this process begins by acknowledging that our very selves are strangers, strangers that we can come to know as we commit ourselves to the attentive work of improvising and composing our lives. She begins her book by writing the following:

> We live with strangers. Those we love most, with whom we share a shelter, a table, a bed, remain mysterious. Wherever lives overlap and flow together, there are depths of unknowing. Parents and children, partners, siblings, and friends repeatedly surprise us, revealing the need to learn where we are most at home. We even surprise ourselves in our own becoming, moving through the cycles of our lives. There is strangeness hidden in the familiar.
>
> At the same time there is familiarity hidden in the strange. We can look with curiosity and respect at the faces of men and women we have never met. Learning to recognize these strangers with whom we share an increasingly crowded and interdependent world, we can imagine ourselves joined in a single family, perhaps by a marriage between adventurous grandchildren.
>
> ... Strangeness and love are not contradictory; to live at peace we need new ways of understanding these two realms, each one embedded in the other (pp. 3, 4).

So, welcome to the borderlands. The invitation still stands.

The anticipation of the experience was overwhelming. Ken summed it up for all of us when he said, "This is incredible, guys. It is nuts. I feel a little like I did about six hours before I was married. I was standing outside talking to my uncle. 'You can't turn back pal. You're in this now. People have come from miles away – one of them even 45 miles! (laughter). What are you going to do, embarrass yourself?' We're in this now, pretty soon we'll be spending money and then we're gone. We'll be in the Nairobi airport wondering how we got there (Group Conversation, February 7, 2001).

Chapter Three:
RESEARCHING THE BORDERLANDS

Narrative inquiry, as a form of curriculum inquiry (Short, 1991), has been the focus of the work of D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly (1986, 1988, 1991, 1995, 1998, 2000). For the past two decades, they have "been captured by the possibility of studying experience rather than using experience as a contextual given for educational discourse" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998, p. 152). This distinction is unique in the field of educational research and, as such, it necessitates that studies situated in the methodology of narrative inquiry must therefore be thorough in its application, accurate in its articulation and clear in its apologetic. In hopes of meeting these criteria, I shall rely heavily on their work.

I, as a novice narrative inquirer, feel as though I have been in conversation with Clandinin and Connelly throughout my research program. As authors of the definitive text entitled *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research* (2000) as well as of several other books and many articles and in their supervisory roles of this inquiry, I actually have been in conversation with them. Continually referring to their work and to them personally is an honest representation of the process I have undergone throughout the inquiry. "The book" – as it has come to be known in the graduate student circles of which I am a part, their other writings, Michael as seminar supervisor at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, and Jean as research supervisor at the University of Alberta, have all functioned as wise guiding conversational partners. They have participated as my references, my directors and my wise counsellors. They and their writings have guided the research decisions made and the methods employed.

Researching Experience

I was given an opportunity to return to Kenya. Unlike my previous trips there, I was also given the chance to be in conversation with and to work alongside a group of Kenyan teacher colleagues who are registered in a two year professional development program. I remember thinking, 'what an amazing experience this will be!' And I remember wondering, 'how will I ever be able to understand the impact this time will have on me and my teaching life?' So many other questions and wonderings began to surface. I thought about cross-cultural factors and language issues. I wondered about race and ethnicity and gender. I questioned the influence of politics and globalization and colonialism. I considered school issues – reform, curriculum, and teacher development. And I thought about my faith and the faith expression of the teachers I would meet who teach religious education in public schools. Every one of these aspects was intriguing and every one would require a unique attention if I was to initiate some intentional research on each of the above.

When the possibility was given for other teachers from my home community to participate in going to Kenya as well, I kept coming back to simply the experience of it all. What an experience this will be. What an experience for me and for the other teachers who will come. Surely, this experience will affect our teaching lives in some way. My research beginnings seemed illustrative of Schön's (1983) starting points for inquiry – a reflection on a practical event in the life of a practicing professional rather than an application of a working theory in the life of a would-be academic. I settled on wanting to research the shifts that would occur in us and in our teaching lives because of the experience in the borderlands, an experience generated by our trip to Kenya.

My studies in the work of and conversations with Clandinin and Connelly pushed me to think about what is meant by the word 'experience.' They have

> been impressed with how universal the word *experience* is in education. The word *experience* is found in homes, schools, higher education, and adult learning institutions. It is found in the most practical discussions of education, and it is found in the most revered theoretical texts. It is owned by no subject field and is found in virtually any community of educational discourse (p. 152).

The word's use, or overuse, led them to inquire about its essence. Their investigation took them to Dewey's work. As a result, they have come to think of 'experience' as a term with a conceptualized meaning and not simply as a word referring to an event. To understand 'experience' from Dewey's (1938a) perspective means to focus on three criteria: interaction – the relationships involved; situation – the specific context; and continuity – the connectedness of the particular interaction and situation to the unity of an individual's life. This theoretical understanding of experience has become the foundation for Clandinin and Connelly's work in both teacher education and narrative inquiry.

To state that, "I settled on wanting to research the shifts that would occur in us and in our teaching lives because of the experience in the borderlands," therefore has a particular meaning. It does not refer to simply recounting the events of our trip, nor to summarizing the learning that took place in a type of list of new insights. It is much more than this. To study this experience means that I realize that every experience is an experience of a person – experience cannot be separated from the one having it. To study this experience means that I realize that every experience is situated – experience cannot be separated from the context. This dissertation is therefore about my experience at this particular time in my teaching life. And, it also means that I must attend to the relationships, the situation and the continuity as the space in which the experience occurs for the other teacher participants as well. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) refer to this as the three-dimensional space. I am calling it the borderlands.

Narrative Inquiry Described

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) define it this way.

> [N]arrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in this same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people's lives, both individual and social. Simply stated ... narrative inquiry is stories lived and told (p. 20).

As a research methodology, narrative inquiry has both many deep roots and many new sprouts. Connelly and Clandinin (1991) explain:

> On the one hand, narrative inquiry may be traced to Aristotle's *Poetics* and Augustine's *Confessions* (see Ricoeur's, 1984, use of these two sources to link time and narrative) and may be seen to have various adaptations and applications in a diversity of areas including education. Dewey's (e.g., 1916, 1934, 1938a, 1938b) work on time, space, experience and sociality is also central. On the other hand, there is a newness to 'narratology' as it has developed in the social sciences, including education (p. 125).

As stated above, narrative inquiry pursues Dewey's (1938a) understanding of experience as having three component parts. "[O]ne criterion of experience is *continuity*, namely, the notion that experiences grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 2). This aspect of experience demands that an inquiry into it honour the past, present and future. A second criterion is the notion of *interaction*. It honours the idea that in any experience, people engage and are engaged by both themselves and others. And third is the criterion of *situation*, an honouring of "the specific concrete physical and topological boundaries of inquiry landscapes" (p. 51). These three aspects create an inquiry space that is inherently three-dimensional:

> [S]tudies have temporal dimensions and address temporal matters; they focus on the personal and the social in a balance appropriate to the inquiry; and they occur in specific places or sequences of places (p. 50).

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) often state that it is equally correct to say 'inquiry into narrative' as it is 'narrative inquiry.'

> By this we mean that narrative is both phenomenon and method. Narrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the patterns of inquiry for its study. To preserve this distinction we use the reasonably well-established device of calling the phenomenon 'story' and the inquiry 'narrative.' Thus, we say that people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, where as narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience (p. 2).

The experience in the borderlands certainly alerted me to many aspects of my teaching life and my teacher knowledge that I had and had not thought about for a while. The questions I asked, the wonderings I had and the situations I encountered all needed telling in storied form. These stories of my life, and of the lives of the teacher participants, are the phenomena under study. How I attended to these wonderings and reflections, how I responded to them, how I interacted with the people around me, and how I write about them is the method. This is the narrative inquiry. Employing this methodology encourages me both to think narratively about the experience and to learn from having been in the midst of the experience. It does seem to be a both/and.

The starting place for narrative inquiry "characteristically begins with the researcher's autobiographically oriented narrative associated with the *research puzzle* (called by some the research problem or research question)" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 41). I am reminded of an observation made by Eisner (1991).

> The historical antecedents of a context provide a background against which particular episodes acquire meaning. Humans learn; they bring with them memories and interpretations of past events. What they experience is, in part, shaped by their personal history (p. 36).

This makes sense to me. If I was to enter into a time in which I was attempting to be particularly alert to the dimensions of an experience, I needed to have clarified for myself and for others the knowledge and dispositions and values that I already held based on my past experiences. The process of putting all of one's tacit or embodied knowledge into words is probably quite impossible. Therefore, confining this process to that which was relevant to and prompted by the anticipation of a particular experience seemed doable and helpful and required intentional decisions along the way.

In addition to putting one's autobiographical past into narrative form, verbalizing embodied knowledge has another purpose in narrative inquiry. It is to provide the researcher, the participants and the readers an opportunity to create new meaning.

> The contribution of narrative inquiry is more often intended to be the creation of a new sense of meaning and significance with respect to the research topic than it is to yield a set of knowledge claims that might incrementally add to knowledge in the field. Furthermore, many narrative studies are judged to be important when they become literary texts to be read by others not so much for the knowledge they contain but for the vicarious testing of life possibilities by readers of the research that they permit (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 42).

The study I undertake is not about the merits of going, nor creating possibilities for Western Canadian teachers to go to work with teachers in another country in order to get reenergized for their teaching life here at home. It is about coming to understand how unique events in our teaching lives can shift our understanding of ourselves and the work that we do. It is about gaining "a new sense of meaning and significance" from being alert to the borderlands that exist and surface in our every day lives. In the case of this

study, the new sense of meaning I hope that we, the teachers in this study as well as those reading the study will gain, will be about coming to know the selves we bring with us each day into the classroom through the deliberate narrative analysis of our shifting teacher identities.

Narrative inquiry makes clear that researchers are thoroughly involved in the entire process.

> [They] are not merely objective inquirers, people on the high road, who study a world lesser in quality than our moral temperament would have it, people who study a world we did not help create. On the contrary, [they] are complicit in the world [they] study. Being in this world, [they] need to remake [them]selves as well as offer up research understandings that could lead to a better world (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 61).

My role as researcher in this study is multidimensional but it is rooted in the central understanding of narrative inquiry that all experience is personal and all learning is relational. All that I think about, all decisions that I make and all that I write in the research text is mine – it is from my perspective. And, all of this has come about because I interact with others involved in the study – the social dimension to the work is unmistakable. I am in a particular context – the situation, and I bring with me the meanings I already hold from experiences of the past – continuity. As researcher, then, I own my own knowledge while acknowledging that this knowledge is socially created, context bound and time encompassing.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) are clear that shifting identities are central to the work of narrative inquiry and therefore to the study of experience.

> [O]ur principal interest in experience is the growth and transformation in the life story that we as researchers and our participants author. Therefore, difficult as it may be to tell a story, the more difficult but important task is the retelling of stories that allow for growth and change. We imagine, therefore, that in the construction of narratives of experience, there is a reflexive relationship between living a life story, telling a life story, retelling a life story, and reliving a life story (p. 71).

To study experience therefore implies the study of shifting identities. One cannot be done without the other. It is as Scott (1992) suggests, individuals do not have experiences but individuals, that is, identities, are constituted through experiences. I am ready to live and tell, to relive and retell, stories of my identities and my stories of the identities of my teacher friends that are generated by my attention to the experience, in Dewey's understanding, of going to and returning from the borderlands. In so doing, we are ready to take next steps as we continue to author our teaching lives, next steps that will shift who it is that we bring to our students in the classroom day by day.

Visiting the Borders of Reductionistic and Formalistic Inquiries

Narrative inquiry, as a newer methodology, has encountered edges of refinement – borders at which its distinctiveness is being clarified. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) recount this process as a visit to the boundaries of reductionistic and formalistic ways of thinking, an understanding that arose from Schwab's delineations of various forms of the interpretive task (1960/1978).[1] Schwab contends that, in order to be considered a viable form, certain principles of inquiry must be met: The terms used to define the phenomenon and its problems, what passes for data, and the kind of statement that passes as a conclusion to a study must all be specified (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994, p. 1317). Of the five forms he goes on to describe, three are relevant to understanding the research I undertake in this study: explaining things in terms of their parts (reductionistic); in terms of something larger of which they are a part (rational, which Clandinin and Connelly refer to as formalistic, 2000); or in terms of themselves (holistic).

One way of attempting to elicit meaning is to reduce the phenomenon to manageable skills, subjects, techniques and tactics. Educational research that focuses "downward," narrows teaching and learning to component parts. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) identify five specific tensions that arise at the boundary between holistic ways of thinking as represented in narrative inquiry and reductionistic ways of thinking: temporality versus timelessness; people-in-process versus people-free; action as narrative expression versus action as cognitive evidence; uncertainty versus causality; and context-bound versus universal applicability (pp. 29-33).

At this reductionistic edge, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) have encountered two key concerns for narrative inquiry. The first has to do with how memory works. Memory tends to take on a "factual, unnuanced quality," an issue that is addressed by the quality of the field texts themselves. The more detailed and the more in-the-moment the field texts are, the more likely it is that the researcher can keep the textured quality of memory in the research text. The concern is

> what was a narrative field text becomes reduced to positive fact in the research text. This form of reductionism is common in autobiographical texts, in which writers may describe an earlier event or feeling as if it were exactly so. But memory is selective, shaped, and retold in the continuum of one's experiences (pp. 141, 142).

And the second concern is the existence of the possibility that the narrative inquirer may become captivated by the common threads and themes across participants rather than staying focused on the themes or narrative threads that are at work within each participant uniquely. In so doing, the participants may inadvertently be placed in

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[1] Research has been conceptualized in several different ways. Perhaps the best known is the quantitative/qualitative delineation. Another is qualitative research's "broad" and "narrow" tension articulated by Denzin and Lincoln's (2000, p. 1048) "seventh moment." I have chosen to use the conceptualization that is rooted in Schwab's work, the boundaries of the interpretative task, as it is the most consistent with the approach of Clandinin and Connelly.

support roles. They then become exemplars of a theme rather than a unique individual who experiences a particular theme at work in his or her own life. It is a "reduction" that tempts the narrative inquirer to leave the uniqueness of the individual behind and to focus on all people in similar contexts addressing similar concerns and issues (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 143).

> The narrative inquirer does not prescribe general applications and uses but rather creates texts that, when well done, offer readers a place to imagine their own uses and applications (p. 42).

Or, as Connelly and Clandinin (1995) also say, "the answers are in the stories, indeed, the answers are the stories" (p. 79).

At the border with formalistic thinking, the narrative inquirer discovers a concern of another kind. He or she needs to find a form to represent the storied lives in storied ways, but not to represent storied lives as exemplars of formal categories. The formalistic desire is to move "upward to overarching categories" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 143). The narrative inquirer's desire is to allow the particularities of each person's story be told while recognizing that all individual stories intersect with stories of the institution, the politics, the profession, the culture, the gender, and others. The tension is between approaching people as representatives of a societal form rather than as composers of lives shaped by social and cultural narratives.

Tensions therefore also exist at the boundary of formalistic thinking: beginning with theory rather than beginning with experience; life events being illustrative of theoretical terms rather than educative in themselves; and the researcher in the inquiry needs to begin with a narrative reconstruction of his or her own research history, a process grounded in reflection (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp. 40-46). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) address each of these three tensions.

Regarding the first of these three tensions, narrative inquiry claims that a person's experience in relation to others and to a social context can be known. It proposes that the researcher can understand experience for what it is and is not bound by the frameworks imposed on it. Events, relationships, moments and insights are what they are. Formalistic thinking however promotes "a view that things are never what they are but are rather what our framework" or theory or outlook makes of them (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 39). Persons, formalists argue, "can never see themselves as they are because they are always something else; specifically they are whatever social structure, ideology, theory, or framework is at work in the inquiry" (p. 39).

> [T]he place of theory in narrative inquiry differs from the place of theory in formalistic inquiries. [F]ormalists begin inquiry in theory, whereas narrative inquirers tend to begin with experience as lived and told in stories. Here we wish to point out that for narrative inquiry, it is more productive to begin with explorations of the phenomena of experience rather than in comparative analysis of various theoretical methodological frames (p. 128).

As stated earlier, it is for this reason that Clandinin and Connelly (2000) speak of a 'research puzzle' rather than a 'research question.' "[T]heoretically, the main issue is for inquirers to sort out a narrative view of experience" (p. 127).

The second tension is in regards to the hope of the inquiry. For narrative inquiry, the aim is to allow the experience itself, not the theories it illustrates, to be educative.

> Narrative focuses on personal experience and social context using an array of personal experience and historical document analysis methods. Data are collected in the form of field texts and may, but need not, conclude with narrative research texts in which comprehensive curriculum stories are written which have an historical, developmental, personal, and social quality. … [N]arrative is a dialectic method in which the emphasis is sometimes on a kind of portrait of individuals or schools, sometimes on aspects of the school's structural and functional details, and sometimes on the existing community and its social history (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994, pp. 1318, 1319).

When the narrative inquiry is "a kind of portrait of individuals," the focus of the study becomes the stories that are generated by the experience and told in the reflexive relationship between the participants and the researcher. The stories told are, in one sense, one's own. But, in another sense, they belong to neither the participant nor the researcher but to the relationship from which they were told. The holistic form of inquiry reveres these generated stories as the beginning, middle and end points of the inquiry.[2]

Thirdly, rather than beginning the inquiry in the story of a category of people, a narrative inquiry begins with the particularities of the researcher's own stories, stories which may reveal how he or she has come to understand the formal categories of which he or she is a part. This beginning is born in reflection. It then moves to discover the particularities of the research participants as well.

> [N]arrative refers to the making of meaning through personal experience by way of a process of reflection in which storytelling is a key element and in which metaphors and folk knowledge take their place. … Because meaning is a personal matter defined, in part, in terms of personal experience, reflection becomes the key device. Our notion of reflection is informed by Dewey (1910, 1938[b]) who defined thinking and logic as the reflective reconstruction of experience and by Schön (1983, 1987) who defines the reflective practitioner and reflective practicum as the key to reform in the professions. … We are convinced that a powerful mode of making meaning through reflection is storytelling. Some authors, such as McIntyre [sic] (1981), go so far as to argue that the essential

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[2] Stories are used in several research methodologies. The uniqueness of narrative inquiry is not the use of stories but the end point of inquiry. In phenomenology, for example, the end point is the essence of an experience. In narrative inquiry, the end point is the retelling of the stories for the purpose of generating new meaning in the lives of the researcher and the participants.

> characteristic of humans is that they are storytelling animals (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 16).

Being aware of the research concerns at the boundaries of narrative inquiry with reductionistic and formalistic ways of thinking has been helpful. But this awareness has not precluded me from stepping over the edges as I made my research journey. It too has been an experience in the borderlands. Allow me to tell the story of my visits to the borders, to the edges described above by Clandinin and Connelly. It is a story of the research decisions I needed to make in order to have this study stay within the boundaries of the study of experience as set by narrative inquiry.

I wrote earlier of my research beginnings as being initiated by the anticipation of a unique personal and professional adventure in Kenya. This is indeed where it began, with the anticipation of an experience. After a process of coming to adopt Dewey's understanding of what is meant by the term 'experience,' my first step away from the integrity of narrative inquiry was to step more into the anticipation of what I and the other four teachers would encounter rather than staying patient in the experience itself. I remember imagining that this experience would certainly help us come to understand how it is that each of us approach the diversity of culture and of ethnicity. I even wrote in my research proposal that this study would help us "understand teachers' personal practical knowledge of diversity and to know if and in what ways this knowledge can be changed or re-storied through a cross-cultural professional development experience."

The anticipation of what we would encounter was a step into formalistic thinking. I had not realized the extent to which 'diversity' itself has become a formalistic category in social science research. Rather than beginning my research with simply wondering what we might encounter and what disruptions we might find, I began my research with the view that we indeed would come face to face with 'other' and with ourselves as 'other' as well (Grossberg, 1993). I began wondering how this and other major categories from the field of cultural studies would surface in the research (Nelson, Treichler & Grossberg, 1992, p. 1).

McCarthy and Crichlow (1993) call attention to the recent tendency of studies of race to be articulated in 'essentialist' and 'reductionistic' terms (p. xvi). By essentialist, they "refer to the tendency in current mainstream and radical writing on race to treat social groups as stable or homogeneous entities" (p. xviii). And by reductionistic, they refer to the tendency "to locate the 'source' of racial differences in schooling in a single variable or cause" (p. xviii). McCarthy and Crichlow highlight Cortes' (1986) analysis of the situation:

> Current mainstream and radical conceptual frameworks do not effectively capture the heterogeneous and variable nature of race relations in either the school setting or society. Theoretical and practical insights that could be gained from a more relational and dialectical method of analyzing racial domination in education – one that attempts to show in detail the links between social structures (whether

they be economic, political, or ideological) and what real people such as teachers and students do – have been forfeited (pp. xviii, xix).

As the teacher participants and I began telling our stories of having encountered diversity throughout our past personal and professional lives, the particularities of our stories did not fit the essentialist, nor the reductionistic frameworks as defined by McCarthy and Crichlow (1993). We, as unique individuals at that point in the research, did not serve as exemplars of a singular category of 'otherness.' We did talk about many moments when we experienced either a sameness or a difference. We did express stories that spoke of the concept of plurality – one that is considered among the oldest and deepest in Western (and non-Western) thinking – the concept of the one and the many (Bernstein, 1987, pp. 519, 520). But, in so doing, we were not attempting to associate with any theory in which the political arena is seen as a marketplace for negotiating competing plural interests of individuals, groups, and classes (p. 521). We were trying to figure out how our experience in the borderlands helps us work toward "a type of society in which we can at once respect and even celebrate differences and plurality but always strive to understand and *seek* a common ground with what is other and different" (p. 521). We were approaching our up-coming experience, not as philosophers, but as pragmatists. And in so doing, the study needed to shift from investigating how the lives of these teachers illustrate the issues represented in the theoretical category of 'diversity' to wanting to understand our lives, lives that were continuing to be authored and composed as we encountered experiences in the borderlands.

Did starting the study with one foot into the formalistic territory negatively affect the integrity of the narrative inquiry? On the contrary, I believe the beginnings of the research in which we told ourselves and each other stories of our encounters with 'otherness' brought a clarity to the experience of the borderlands. These stories allowed us as participants and me as researcher to discover anew the particularities of each person's story and to listen with reverence to how each of us has negotiated life in our various social, political and cultural worlds. Beginning in this way also recognized that we all approach new experiences with some sense of who we are in our worlds already. Had we not begun with talking about our encounters with diversity, we would have had to begin with some other understanding of how we have come to make sense of our past experiences. The challenge was to not let this framework become the lens through which we viewed our experience. This visit to the formalistic boundary allowed me to gain a sense of confidence in the retelling of our stories as indeed being our stories, full of uniqueness and not necessarily as shared stories of a theoretical perspective.

After returning from our time in Kenya and after again listening to the stories we were telling ourselves and each other about our time there, I again visited a boundary. This time it was with the reductionistic way of thinking. I was more aware of making this diversion. It was motivated by an increasing sense of panic regarding the research study. I was hearing amazing reflections but in my need to make some sense of it all and to affirm my initial belief in wanting to learn from experience, I wandered into the world of "reducing" what I was hearing to common themes across the participants' lives. I would read and reread the transcripts and notice the many times words like 'gratitude'

and 'curiosity' surfaced. I found myself trying to mine nuggets of understanding regarding teacher professional development. I pushed towards a linguistic analysis of spiritual expression as practiced by the Kenyan teachers in comparison to the Canadians. In so doing, I realized that I was leaving the identities of the teacher participants behind.

Did venturing into this type of reductionistic thinking hinder the research of the experience? I think that for a time it kept me from honouring our stories. But, again, our stories, their uniqueness and their social quality, called me back to reflect on the unique identities of each participant. Am I saying that the common themes and topics that surfaced are not worth pursuing? On the contrary, they are extremely important. They each are aspects of our world that we need to learn more about. They need to be studied as areas that arise from teachers' encounters with their worlds. But, in order to follow the research plotlines they generate, a researcher would most likely require a type of inquiry methodology other than narrative (Short, 1991). The beginning point may indeed be the same – the study of experience, but it is the endpoint that differs because of the path the inquiry follows. Visiting this boundary was not problematic in itself. It was the direction that I for a time pursued that was inappropriate to the integrity of the narrative inquiry.

Narrative inquiry aims to research experience holistically, not formalistically nor reductionistically. It holds in tension, on the one side, that individuals have experiences that take place in a power ridden and socially dynamic context that must be acknowledged. On the other side, our experiences are so broad and all encompassing that we need to reduce it to manageable areas of investigation. The formalistic and reductionistic ways of thinking are the tensions that engage narrative inquiry. In its midst, narrative inquiry attempts to keep in focus the unique individuals who live in this tension. In order to do so, it stands on the notion that people are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially lead storied lives, and who compose and author their identities along the way.

> This general concept is refined into the view that education and educational research is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories; learners, teachers, and researchers are storytellers and characters in their own and other's stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2).

Why a Narrative Inquiry?

By engaging in narrative inquiry for this study:

- I am defining the phenomena as being the storied lives of the teachers who participate.
- I am focusing on the lived experience of the five teacher participants. The study is about their identities' continuing formation.
- I am being allowed to witness and to articulate the shifts in the teacher participants' identities narratively, through the telling and retelling of stories in

relationship and in the context of a cross-cultural professional development experience.

- I am attempting to provide a detailed and yet holistic documentation of the change process of the teacher participants.
- I am being allowed to try on a newer research methodology, one that is making a significant contribution to educational research's understanding of life in schools.
- I am hopefully contributing to the social concern of creating a more just and accepting society by first encouraging the continued development of this value in the lives of the teachers who participate in the study and of those who will live vicariously through the reading of it. Because individuals participate in the construction of themselves through the stories lived and told, it is through these stories that one kind of world or another is made possible as teachers live their stories in their worlds (Berlak, 1996, p. 97).

Research Puzzle

The puzzle for this study is this – how is it that our experiences shift who we are? The experience I am studying is the experience of the borderlands generated by our going to Kenya – the relationships, the context and the continuity it involves. The people I am studying are teachers, five of us to be exact, and how it is that our teacher identities, our 'stories to live by,' shift because of the experience.

Because I am choosing to understand the lives of the teachers in this study narratively, I recognize that our teacher identities are composed of our 'stories to live by' and that 'stories to live by' are shaped by the experiences we have. "It is not so much that teachers and researchers, professionals on the landscape, need new identities, new stories to live by: they need shifting, changing identities; shifting, changing stories to live by ..." (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p. 131).

This study is the coming to know some of the 'stories to live by' of the teacher participants and myself as we relate stories in preparation and anticipation of the cross-cultural professional development experience. They are the 'stories to live by' that are generated by our relationship with each other. This will be a new experience – it is the first time the five of us have been together as a community of friends and colleagues. It is the first time the five of us have worked together on a project. And it is the first time that the five of us have travelled to Kenya and lived alongside Kenyan teachers together. It is an experience that therefore creates a unique space within which we can come to know about ourselves, about how we are and are becoming in our worlds. It is for these reasons that I refer to this experience as being in the borderlands. And then, through the retelling of our 'stories to live by,' I am offered glimpses as to how the 'stories from the borderlands' shift our teacher identities. I am narratively inquiring into the reconstruction of our 'stories to live by' because of our encounter with the 'stories from the borderlands.'

Research Timeline

2000	January	I took a night course in the Faculty of Education and began forming my research interests.
	August	I was in Kenya and involved in the planning of the two year professional development program for Kenyan teachers.
	September - December	I took a full course load at the University of Alberta.
	October	The partnering sponsors of the program decided to invite other Canadian teachers to participate.
	November	A preliminary meeting for interested teachers was held.
2001	January - April	I took a full course load at the University of Alberta.
	February	First meeting of eleven interested teachers took place.
	March	Second meeting of seven teachers was held. I presented my hope of a possible research project associated with our time in Kenya.
	May	I successfully completed the candidacy exam and ethics approval by the University of Alberta. Conversations negotiating the participation of five teachers who were committed to going to Kenya in the research project began. Consent forms were signed.
	May - July	Individual and group conversations (audio taped and transcribed). E-mail correspondence.
	August	Our trip to Kenya. Group conversations (audio taped and transcribed).
2002	September - January	Individual and group conversations (audio taped and transcribed). I began the writing of the research text.
	January - May	The writing of the research text continued.
	May - August	I negotiated the research text with the teacher participants.
	September	I presented the thesis to my supervisory committee members.

Research Framework: The Three-Dimensional Space of Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry understands experience within a three dimensional inquiry space. Some have likened the space to a parade: as it progresses through time, it actually moves through a physical context and what is attended to depends on our situatedness, our vantage point as observer and even participant (Geertz, 1995, p. 4). Others have come to understand this space as that of being on a train: the train moves through place having a past departure point and a future destination. The passengers, while on the train, can move back and forth as the train continues to travel and are able to enter into conversations with other passengers or take time to reflect personally on the individual's own experience (Forsythe Moore, 2001). Even others have compared this space to that of a mathematical graph with three axes: a vertical axis of time, a horizontal axis of space and an intersecting, three-dimensional axis of interaction (Ross, 2002). And I am conceptualizing this space as the borderlands – a space wherein a situation, an event, a relationship or a moment interrupts the continuity of one's life experiences so that individuals are able, within the interactions of their travelling companions, to gain new understanding of their identities. Regardless of which image, the inquiry space created in narrative studies "moves back and forth between the personal and the social" (interaction), "simultaneously thinking about the past, present, and future" (continuity), "and does so in ever-expanding social milieus" (situation) (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp. 2, 3).

These images of the inquiry space help keep inquirers from constricting the space too narrowly, from conceiving it as being boxlike rather than infinitely open.

> Our hope is that … the idea of a three-dimensional space will open up imaginative possibilities for inquirers, possibilities that might not as easily have been seen without the idea. The inquiry space, and the ambiguity implied, remind us to be aware of where we and our participants are placed at any particular moment – temporally, spatially, and in terms of the personal and the social (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 89).

In answer to the question of what narrative inquirers do in this space, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) respond, "they make themselves as aware as possible of the many, layered narratives at work in their inquiry space. They imagine narrative intersections, and they anticipate possible narrative threads emerging" (p. 70). They realize that this space is messy, full of ambiguity and open ends, and very vulnerable for both the participants and the researcher.

> Working in this space means that we become visible with our own lived and told stories. Sometimes, this means that our own unnamed, perhaps secret, stories come to light as much as do those of our participants. This confronting of ourselves in our narrative past makes us vulnerable as inquirers because it makes secret stories public. In narrative inquiry, it is impossible (or if not impossible, then deliberately self-deceptive) as researcher to stay silent or to present a kind of perfect, idealized, inquiring, moralizing self (pp. 61, 62).

Negotiating this Study's Inquiry Space and the Ethical Considerations Therein

Conceiving of the inquiry space as a parade or a train or a graph or a borderland is helpful because it reinforces the point that each narrative inquiry actually has a unique inquiry space of its own: who are the participants and the researcher in the study whose interactions, both inward and outward, will be attended to?; how did they come to be part of the inquiry?; which plotlines of past, present and future are to be followed?; and, what is the context, the specific physical place in which the inquiry takes place? For the purposes of this study, I have come to understand the three-dimensional inquiry space, the borderlands, in the following way.

1. The Interaction

Inviting participants into the inquiry can be understood as "a negotiation of a shared narrative unity" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 3). In many ways, we live this negotiation in every day life. It is the idea of friendship – "a sharing, an interpenetration of two or more persons' spheres of experience" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988, p. 281). And, it is the foundation upon which a research relationship is constituted and upon which it continues to be constructed. The process is one of beginning to live the shared story, of emphasizing a context of care, and of hearing all voices tell their stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4).

I knew that I would have an opportunity to return to Kenya in the summer of 2001 while I was still there in August 2000. At that time, I was there as a participant in several projects and, during our stay, conversations began to implement the two year professional development program for teachers. The plan was that the sponsoring project partners would begin this new venture in August 2001. They had a whole year to prepare and I was invited to participate.

In October 2000, the sponsoring partners of the program decided to open up the program to other Canadian teachers. What was going to be my borderlands experience because of Kenya became a shared borderlands: I would not be going alone. Together, we Canadians would be able to travel to Kenya in order to participate as colleagues, fellow learners and resource personnel in the courses. Together, we would explore the borderlands.

The invitation was extended to all educators associated with a church community in Edmonton. They, and any interested colleagues from their various schools, networks and districts, were offered a chance to hear more about the project at an information meeting at the end of November 2000. A second informational meeting was held in February 2001. Ten teachers representing three school districts and five schools attended. Another teacher, who had recently moved away from the area, was unable to attend the information session but let her interest be known. Of this group of eleven, eventually five teachers were able to commit to and actually participate in the

professional development opportunity in Kenya: Ken, Dana, Larry, Wendy and myself, Carla.

Each of us chose to be part of the professional development program with Kenyan colleagues independent of the research project. We had, as fully capable adults, considered the risks, the costs and the possibilities as best as anyone can prior to becoming involved in a cross-cultural travel adventure and eventually came to choose to participate. I did not present my interest in studying our experience until one of our meetings in the spring 2001 and offered a formal invitation for their participation in May 2001. Involvement in the study added a new dimension of intentionality to the experience. As much as I highly regarded, and continue to do so, each teacher's personal maturity and decision-making ability, I, as the researcher, felt obligated to address additional potential areas of concern to which their involvement in the study might bring.

These potential areas of concern have everything to do with narrative inquiry's attention to interaction. Participation in the study meant that I would be attending to both the inward and the outward interactions of experience. It meant that I would be encouraging the telling and the listening, the retelling and the re-listening, of our stories of past experiences, present encounters and future anticipations. For each of us, it was an invitation to attend to the values, beliefs, opinions and assumptions we each held with ourselves as well as an invitation to attend to my relationships with these friends and colleagues. I attempted to honour these inward and outward interactions by talking about them together. On the consent form that every participant signed, I alerted them to what this process may be like by sharing what the process was beginning to be for me (see Appendix A: Research Consent and Consent Form). I offered them the waves of questions I found myself constantly considering, questions that exposed some of my held beliefs and assumptions and exposed some of my unexamined attitudes and meanings. We talked about who we have come to know ourselves to be in relationship with others, what we like and need to have when we are away from home and ways in which we could honour this for one another. In so doing, we began to negotiate the space in which the inquiry would occur. And, in so doing, we were creating a unique community that became the mirror in which we would come to see ourselves and each other in new ways.

By the very nature of this study being set in a professional development opportunity with Kenyan teachers, there also exists another interaction, that of the Canadians with our Kenyan colleagues. Our conversations and our times of studying, singing, eating, and laughing together, are obviously significant and precious moments that are inherent in our experience of the borderlands. The five Canadians did choose to tell of some of these moments and, when I include them in the research text that follows, they are recounted to show some aspect of the Canadian's identity, not that of the Kenyan teacher, for it is the identities of only the Canadian teachers that I have chosen to study.

I did and continue to wonder about the shifts in the identities of the Kenyan teachers from having had an experience of professional development alongside Canadian teachers. For three very practical reasons, however, the shifts in the identities of our Kenyan colleagues are not the focus of this study. First, to study the shifts in the

identities of the Kenyan teachers would have required ethical clearance from the Government of Kenya. Second, because I needed to limit the participants to a manageable number, I chose to focus only on the shifting identities of the Canadian teachers. And third, I was not able to spend 'before' and 'after' time with the Kenyan teachers and was not therefore able to be in a position to study the shifts in their identities. Even if I had had a 'before' and 'after' time with them, the time I would have required would have needed to be much longer and of a different nature than the time I spent with the Canadian teachers. With the Canadians, I share a common landscape culturally, linguistically, socially, and politically. I do not share this with our Kenyan colleagues and any attempt to study their identities would require a knowledge that takes a great deal of time and intentionality to gain.

2. The Continuity

The experience we were about to share in the borderlands would certainly be the source of new stories in each of our lives but they would be stories that would be part of the larger and unique stories of each of us. The new stories would be extensions of past stories and they would also become touchstones for future ones. In an attempt to honour this past and yet to provide a place to begin, the participants and I agreed to an exercise that would help us tell the stories from which we came. We agreed to prepare a timeline. We called it the "waking up to diversity timeline" and, on it, we indicated moments, events and relationships that facilitated our learning about difference. These were the past stories that we each brought to the experience of the inquiry.

This particular inquiry has a very strong temporal sense to it because it is framed so dramatically around the before, during and after adventure in Kenya. The passing of time is always an element in narrative inquiries but in this study, I needed to pay particular attention to this dimension so that I could allow every opportunity possible to notice the shifts in our 'stories to live by.' The very nature of 'shifting' implies this same temporality. It is what gets us from the 'before' to the 'after.'

After our time in Kenya when we were all back on our familiar landscapes of home, school and community, we talked together about the Mitaboni moments that we would add to that timeline. These moments are indeed our own moments, shared with me because of the research study, but unique to each of us in some way. There are some conversations or events that I shared with Larry, for example, of which the other three teachers were not a part. Other moments are corporate – they were encountered and considered by the five of us. As we retold and relived moments from Mitaboni that are now part of our continuing experiences, these moments will be linked with the entire adventure of being with each other. All of these moments, moments from Mitaboni and moments from our lives prior to going to Mitaboni that we chose to tell one another as well, are all part of the continuity of our lives.

3. The Situation

The purpose of this study is about noticing the shifts that happen in our 'stories to live by' when we take those stories into a new context. The study therefore has two distinct 'situations.'

The first is our home context. Before going to Kenya, the five of us met individually and corporately in living rooms and coffee shops, classrooms and offices. Here, we told ourselves and one another stories from our pasts that helped us understand how it is that we each approach our worlds. In this place, we visited places of our childhoods, former adventures in other countries and schools where we have each taught. We did not literally visit them of course. Our memories brought all of these places into that present. Chapter Four offers these stories organized into 'stories to live by' – Connelly and Clandinin's (1999) way of describing individuals' identities.

After our time in Kenya, we returned to this same situation. We again told ourselves and one another stories in those same living rooms and coffee shops, classrooms and offices. We now had stories of the borderlands to add to our repertoire. And, some of the stories we told after our experience were the same ones we had told previously. But this time, they were told a little differently because we had been in the borderlands. Being able to articulate these shifts is what this study is about. By entitling Chapter Six, *'Stories To Live By' Retold,* I hope to make these shifts visible.

The second 'situation' is what I am calling the borderlands. The borderlands in this study is the three dimensional inquiry space. It is the space that the five of us created by being together, the majority of which was in the cottage in Mitaboni, Kenya. As we made our home there for two weeks, we created a space that allowed us to tell and retell our 'stories to live by,' a telling that was triggered by the experience we were living in that place at that time. It was a demanding space and yet it was safe – emotionally and psychologically safe. We worked hard at the tasks that had brought us there but we also enjoyed, even revelled, in the gift of a space that allowed us to tell about our lives as teachers, as research participants, and as friends.

This space is, in part, a physical location. It is on the continent of Africa, in the country of Kenya. The town is called Mitaboni and it is approximately 80 kilometers south west of the capitol city of Nairobi, a distance that takes nearly two hours to drive by car. The area the town is in is known as the Machakos district because Machokos is the city most near. Even though the town of Mitaboni is comprised of only two main streets, it services thousands of people. The cottage is on the property that is owned by the Africa Brotherhood Church (ABC), an indigenous African Christian denomination. As an official sponsor of public education in Kenya, the ABC has over 700 schools and 5500 teachers in its purview. While the head offices of the denomination and the schools are in Machakos, the Mitaboni property has a divinity college, a church, a dormitory, a dining hall and several cottages. A residential secondary girls' school is on the adjacent property to the east and, just north, is the town of Mitaboni itself.

In Chapter Five, I write four 'stories from the borderlands.' These stories are not meant to be 'stories from Kenya.' They are stories from that three dimensional space. The metaphorical borderlands is an unfamiliar locale in which the five of us encountered moments that interrupted our lives' continuity, that dislocated our sense of ourselves in relation to one another and to our Kenyan colleagues, and therefore served as "disruption and essential counterpoint" (Steedman, 1986, p. 22) to our 'stories to live by.'

This second situation, the geographical location which gives rise to the metaphorical borderlands of the narrative inquiry, is the place we visited during our travel experience to another country. Although the physical place changed, from Canada to Kenya, the research continued to focus only on the five teacher participants and our metaphorical borderlands.

Composing Field Texts

Field texts are the data source for narrative inquirers.

> [They] are memory enhancers that fill in the spaces of forgotten occurrences (outward experiences) and feelings (inward experiences). ... Lively conversations for instance just happen. But capturing the nuances of this living in field texts is complex and filled with ambiguity (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp. xiv, 91).

Throughout the inquiry, in the before, during and after times of our time in Kenya, I created several kinds of field texts in order to make sense of the experience we were living and to work towards an intimacy of relationship with each of the teachers. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) emphasize this point that field texts are indeed created because they are "neither found nor discovered" (p. 92). They are created or composed and are therefore "imbued" with interpretation.

> As researchers, we select the moment to turn the tape on, we select the questions to be asked, and so on. But more important to our point that all field texts are inevitably interpretive texts, we pick up on some participant responses by responding in certain ways – for example, by smiling, by asking a question that seems related at the moment, or by asking for clarification. Because of our body responses, the participant in the interview may respond with more detail or may change the response. Equally, as we engage in the interview, there is only a certain amount of time. When a researcher encourages response and discussion on one point, still other points are left uncovered or less well developed. The field text is shaped by the selective interest or disinterest of researcher or participant (or both). What may appear as an objective tape recording of a structured interview is already an interpretive and contextualized text: it is interpretive because it is shaped by the interpretive processes of researcher and participant and their relationship, and it is contextualized because of the particular circumstances of the interview's origins and setting (p. 94).

The field texts I created for the purpose of the inquiry included: the "waking up to diversity" timelines, the audio recordings of our conversations both individually and as a group, my transcriptions of them, a personal journal as well as some journal entries of those teacher participants who were willing to share them with me, e-mail communications between individual participants and those directed to and from the group, photographs, video recordings, and notes. My intent with all of these texts was to record as many of the narrative expressions as I possibly could.

Conversations, with just one other teacher participant at a time or with the group, make up the majority of my field texts. And they are conversations – either recorded and transcribed or remembered and notated, rather than interviews. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain the difference as they understand it and as how I experienced it.

> Research interviews normally have an inequality about them. The direction of the interview, along with its specific questions, are governed by the interviewer. However, researchers who establish intimate participatory relationships with participants find it difficult, if not impossible, to conduct such interviews with participants. Even when they begin with the intention of conducting an interview, the interview often turns into a form of conversation (p. 110).

The role memory plays in the creation of field texts is significant. If not used in conjunction with field texts, it has a way of smoothing over the textured details of the moment. Having a variety of good field texts helps keep the fullness of the experience alive.

> Field texts help fill in the richness, nuance, and complexity of the landscape, returning the reflecting researcher to a richer, more complex, and puzzling landscape than memory alone is likely to construct (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 83).

Field Text to Research Text

When all the conversations had been transcribed and the photographs developed and journal entries highlighted, I came to that time in the research process when I needed to figure out what to do next. I knew I needed to write but, write what? In my desperation to accomplish something, I realize now, I visited the boundary of reductionistic thinking, one of the visits of which I wrote above. Key words and topics, recurring phrases and themes seemed easily recognizable. But in my rush, I missed who the teachers are in their worlds. Instead, I tuned into what they thought about their worlds and focused on common rather than unique narrative threads.

Thankfully, I did not cross that boundary too far nor for too long. Jean Clandinin kept asking, "but who are these people? Write your and their 'stories to live by.'"

I went back to my field notes, not just once but many times. As I read and reread, I tried to envision how it is that we each approach our worlds. I was not to attempt to articulate common themes. I was to try to discover unique themes, threads that were woven into each of the teacher participants' lives. I was to try to capture part of an identity. But, this is the very heart of the mystery of the puzzle. Identities cannot be captured. They are not static even though they may appear so. They can best be known through our peripheral vision (Bateson, 1994). We are given glimpses of them as we live our lives. The written research text, like all narrative texts, therefore has "a tentative best-guess-at-the-moment sense about them" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 14).

> As inquirers, we tend to define our phenomenon as if life stood still and did not get in our way. But life does not stand still; it is always getting in the way, always making what may appear static and not changing into a shifting, moving, interacting complexity (p. 125).

Once I started reading my field notes for the purpose of capturing a part of our teacher and people identities, I could see them. I would read a comment and respond with an assurance that this or that particular quotation is this person. These moments were moments of recognition. They were like moments I have had when I have been birthday or Christmas shopping. I spot a particular item and I recognize that that particular item is the person I have in mind. When rereading my transcripts with the intent of recognition, the participant's words seemed to capture who I know him or her to be.

> Sometimes, our field texts are so compelling that we want to stop and let them speak for themselves. ... But as researchers we cannot stop there, for our inquiry task is to discover and construct meaning in those texts. Field texts need to be reconstructed as research texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 130).

So now I had a new problem. I simply wanted to leave the field texts as they were. My researcher voice seemed unnecessary. The teacher participants were telling who they were. Why need I mediate their voices with mine? Again, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) had an answer.

> In general, field texts are not constructed with reflective intent. Rather, they are close to experience, tend to be descriptive, and are shaped around particular events. Field texts have a recording quality to them, whether auditory or visual. Research texts are at a distance from field texts and grow out of the repeated asking of questions concerning meaning and significance. ... [A]n inquirer composing a research text looks for the patterns, narrative threads, tensions, and themes either within or across an individual's experience and in the social setting (p. 132).

My role as researcher in narrative inquiry is therefore to gather the moments of recognition and to combine them with intentional reflective questioning for the purpose

of creating a new and fuller meaning of who we are in our worlds. It is out of this process that the research text is formed.

Researcher Role and Research Text

I am the researcher of this study and my role is therefore to narratively inquire into the moments, relationships, memories, incidents and wonderings about which the teacher participants chose to tell me. Jean Clandinin kept telling me to "say more." She convinced me that my job was to unpack the participants' words so that their identities – at least the identities that I came to know because of my relationship with them, became visible. In a way, I became the teller of their stories, which, some may conclude, actually makes their stories mine. However, in another way, 'stories to live by' do not exist outside of relationship. The 'stories to live by' that I write about each of us are the 'stories to live by' that are known because of the teacher participants' unique connection with me in the context of a travel adventure at this particular time in each of our lives. If each of our spouses, for example, chose to write the 'stories to live by' that they have come to know in the one of us who is their spouse, the 'stories to live by' may be different. Each relationship will call forth some of who we are in a fashion that is unique to the interaction, the situation and the continuity.

Perhaps the titles of each of the sections in Chapters Four and Six, ought therefore to be *The 'Stories to Live By' of [name of teacher participant] as They Have Become Known in Relationship to Carla.* However, for the simple ease of keeping each section clear regarding about whom I am writing rather than making a statement in regards to ownership, I have chosen to entitle each 'story to live by' section with the name of the person about whom I am writing: *Ken's ..., Dana's ..., Larry's ...,Wendy's ..., and Carla's 'Stories to Live By.'* Before I actually tell one of the 'stories to live by' that I have come to know about each of us, I write an introductory section entitled, *Preface: Knowing [name of teacher participant].* The purpose of this section is to assist the reader in coming to know the history I have with each teacher participant and to emphasize that the 'stories to live by' I am about to tell about each of them, are the stories that have been fashioned out of our relationship prior to and generated by our experience in the borderlands.

As well as making intentional decisions regarding my choice of titles, I also made an intentional decision as to the format of the next three chapters. I chose to organize the 'stories to live by' in the frame of time, the 'before' and 'after' the experience in the borderlands. Given that time is such a basic and powerful component to understanding change, it made sense to me to let it become the structure. I chose to include all of our 'stories to live by' in the 'before' chapter and then again in the 'after' chapter in order to emphasize the fact that we all had a 'before', a 'during', and an 'after' – together. I give each of us our own 'stories to live by' and 'stories to live by' retold sections, but all of them have been generated by having experienced the borderlands as a community of friends, colleagues and research participants. It is for this reason that I chose not to organize our 'stories to live by' in separate individual portrait chapters.

The four 'stories from the borderlands' that are told in Chapter Five function as the 'during' of the experience. The stories I choose to tell are entitled '*Dissecting Trays*,' '*Welded Signs*,' '*The Evangelist*,' and '*Amsterdam*.' I will elaborate more on the specific criteria I used to choose these four stories in particular at the beginning of that chapter. However, as far as the decisions that went into organizing the research text the way I have is concerned, my hope was to give the reader a sense of our community experience in the borderlands while in Mitaboni. While we were there, I did not have time nor space to have individual conversations with each of the participants. From the time we arose in the morning to the time we retired at night, we were together – eating, chatting, laughing, teaching, learning, singing, walking – living. This therefore became one of the criteria I used to decide which 'stories from the borderlands' I would write: I decided to write those stories that reflect the social nature of our time together in Mitaboni. I chose not to tell, in this 'during' chapter, stories such as '*Heart of Darkness,* ' which is one of Ken's borderlands stories. Nor did I tell the story of '*Karanja*' for it is a story unique to Larry. These two stories, as well as others from my initial list of twenty that I desired to tell, do emerge in Chapter Six when I retell our 'stories to live by.' This 'during' chapter is therefore not a collection of events or conversations or moments that we individually contributed to a type of literary photo album. Instead, it is four stories that serve to describe some and to represent many of the interruptions the metaphoric borderlands caused in all of our 'stories to live by' that, in turn, shifted our identities.

The research text provided in the following three chapters therefore does represent the work I have done with the field texts. It demonstrates my reflective intent, my rendering of our 'stories to live by' that have been fashioned out my relationship with each one in the situation of a cross-cultural professional development opportunity at this time in our lives. The decisions I made about the overall organization of the research text, the titles of all of the stories, the content they include and the form they take were therefore done remembering that

> narrative inquiry research texts are indeed 'grand contraptions' built on multiple, fluid foundations and formed into ambiguous shapes that may ring more, or less, crisp and clear as one thing from one vantage point and another from another vantage point (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 154).

Negotiating the Research Text

> One of the poignant moments in narrative inquiry is always the moment when research texts are shared with participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 135).

I did feel very nervous. As the time drew near to each one of my separate meetings with the four teacher participants, with my friends, I grew increasingly anxious as to what their responses to my writing of their 'stories to live by' would be. I have been able to identify some of the reasons for my anxiety. I am sure there are others. One reason was simply the fact that I had put a lot of time and thought into the writing and, if

they did not approve and if they did not see themselves in my writing of them, it would mean that I would need start again, so to speak. Another reason was about what the wonderings their responses might generate. I was creating meaning out of their stories and I wondered if they would join me in coming to hold the same meaning. Would they consider a particular story that they had told me too revealing? Might they feel too vulnerable themselves or for those whom they reference to allow me to offer that particular story in the research text? In my anxiety, would I be able to hear continued revelations of their 'stories to live by?' And a last reason is a more esoteric one. I had the distinct sense that the 'stories to live by' I was presenting to my four friends were sacred. I was holding very precious pieces of who they are and was offering them back to them for them to hold in a new way as well. Holding things this precious always makes me nervous.

My nervousness seemed matched with that of each teacher participant. They too were anxious, each in their own way, upon seeing and hearing my account of who they each are for the first time. But, as we progressed, we both were able to allow the story to be something other than the participant's self and my written creation. Clandinin and Connelly (1991) reminded me of how Novak (1975) described this process:

> A story, once told, no longer belongs solely to the storyteller. It has existence independently of his will, intentions, or analysis. It is an object accessible to others. Others may see in it what the storyteller does not. Story is not narcissism or subjectivity, but its opposite: the making of an independent object (p. 199).

Clandinin and Connelly (1991) conclude:

> And so it is in writing, and reading narrative research accounts. Ultimately every narrativist researcher will suffer both blessing ('She saw more in what I wrote than I ever imagined') and blight ('She saw my participants as no more than blind reproducers of social inequity'). Narrativist researchers set out their narrative purposes and an appropriate context and counsel readers to play the believing game to ascertain the truth of the story. Readers assuming this way of participating in the narrative experience of another need to be prepared to see the possible meanings there are in the story and, through this process, see other possibilities for telling their own stories (p. 278).

<u>Criteria by which to Judge a Narrative Inquiry:</u>

> [N]arrative relies on criteria other than validity, reliability, and generalizability. It is important not to squeeze the language of narrative criteria into a language created for other forms of research (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 7).

Criteria, which can be applied to narrative inquiry, are the degree to which the researcher is able to successfully represent the voice and signature of each of the participants. Third, it is the degree to which readers of the inquiry can enter into the

inquiry from their own particular vantage point. This is referred to as the sense of audience. And the fourth criterion is the quality of wakefulness the narrative inquiry creates. I present definitions of and comments on each of these criteria here so that they may be carried into the following chapters.

Voice:

> In its broadest sense, voice may be thought of as belonging to participants, researcher, and other participants and other researchers for whom a text speaks (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 146).

I struggled with the criterion of 'voice' throughout the process of writing the research text. This struggle surfaced in two ways. First, it was the struggle I wrote of earlier in regards to wanting the teacher participants to speak for themselves. It was a struggle between using their words just as they were offered to me in our conversations versus using my researcher voice to unpack their words for the purpose of gaining new meaning. Second, the struggle was between the 'voice' I use when I write the 'stories to live by' of the teacher participants and the 'voice' I use when I write my 'stories to live by.' The teacher participants and I did go through a different process. They told me their stories orally, which I in turn wrote in 'stories to live by' form. I simply wrote my 'stories to live by' without first speaking them orally in conversation. As well, I have been told that my writing 'voice,' the one I used to write my 'stories to live by,' is one that is very strong and literary. I was concerned that this 'voice' and the 'voice' used to tell the participants' 'stories to live by' might be dissonant in some way.

Signature:

> Signature is commonly thought of as attached to the researcher but may as well be thought to refer to participants. When narrative inquirers return to participants with text, their question is not so much, Have I got it right? Is this what you said? Is this what you do? Rather, it is something much more global and human: Is this you? Do you see yourself here? Is this the character you want to be when this is read by others? These are more questions of identity than they are questions of whether or not one has correctly reported what a participant has said or done (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 148).

Because I am aware of just how difficult it is for individuals' to see themselves, to know their own identities, I wondered whether each teacher participant would be able to recognize themselves in the way I was writing about them. If the teacher participants did question my rendering of them, I wondered how I would be able to know if their concern was because the particular 'story to live by' in question did miss the mark or was it because the teacher participants were previously unaware that the particular story is indeed the way that I have come to know them to be in their worlds. The affirmation that my writing did accurately represent the 'signature' of each teacher participant came in two stages. The first stage was through the negotiating process with each teacher participant wherein they each did recognize themselves in my writing. And the second

stage came when each teacher participant had the chance to read my renderings of the other members of our group. By their affirmation that they did indeed recognize each of the others, they were also acknowledging my renderings of themselves, this time from another's point of view.

Audience:

> A sense of audience peering over the writer's shoulder needs to pervade the writing and the written text. It is excusable to misjudge an audience and write a text that is not read as meaningful by others. But it is inexcusable not to have a sense of audience and a sense of what it is about one's research text that might be valuable for them (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 149).

Throughout the study, I was very aware that this experience in the borderlands was generated by a very unique and exotic adventure, one in which many teachers will never be able to participate. I was concerned that this would keep the reader from being able to enter in. I have tried to emphasize that borderlands do exist in our every day lives in the classroom and not just on foreign landscapes. I wrote about some of the borderlands I have encountered in my every day teaching life in my 'story to live by' of '*Knowing the Borderlands of My World*' (p. 78). My hope in researching this particular experience in the borderlands is to help the 'audience' – teachers, both in-service and pre-service, and teacher educators, recognize the unique borderlands that do exist and are waiting for them to explore as they continue to think about who they are and are becoming.

Wakefulness:

> Narrative inquiry, positioned as it is at the boundaries of reductionistic and formalistic modes of inquiry, is in a state of development, a state that asks us as inquirers to be wakeful, and thoughtful, about all of our inquiry decisions. … As we continue to work at the boundaries of narrative inquiry, we attempt to develop criteria that work within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. However, it is *wakefulness* that in our view most needs to characterize the living out of our narrative inquiries, whether we are in the field, writing field texts, or writing research texts and wondering about what criteria to use in a particular narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp. 184, 185).

'Wakefulness' has, in a sense, become a new 'story to live by' for me. Throughout the research process, I have felt as though I have been on 'high alert' to the nuances in our words (those of the teacher participants and I), in our stories and in our on-going friendships. Even now, as I consider the completed dissertation, I continue to see new connections and new insights in the stories that we told one another during the research process and how I continue to come to know these friends. Whether or not I have been sufficiently 'wakeful' – sufficiently alert to the many layers of meaning within the stories told and recounted in the research text is for the reader to decide.

Chapter Four:
'STORIES TO LIVE BY'

'Stories to live by' are Connelly and Clandinin's (1999) way of understanding our identities. "They are narrative constructions that take shape as life unfolds and that may, as narrative constructions are wont to do, solidify into a fixed entity, an unchanging narrative construction, or they may continue to grow and change" (p. 95). They are not meant to be deeply psychological in nature in that they do not necessarily reveal unconscious drives, nor archetypical structures. They are simply descriptions of how we are in our worlds as evidenced by the stories we choose to tell ourselves and one another. They are narrative constructions of how we are in our worlds.

> ['Stories to live by'] are expressions of an embodied knowledge of the landscape, of space and time, of borders, cycles, and rhythms. They express an aesthetic sense of being in the right place at the right time and of doing certain things according to satisfying temporal cycles. They express a sense of moral appropriateness of certain actions associated with spatial and temporal borders and how people position themselves on the landscape relative to these borders. People's stories to live by have moral, emotional, and aesthetic qualities (p. 113).

In this chapter, I tell a few of the 'stories to live by' of each of the five of us that I came to know or know again because of our experience together in the borderlands. We all have dozens, maybe even hundreds, of 'stories to live by,' many more than can ever be captured in one written account because they are stories which are known in relationship. The stories I choose to write in this chapter are the stories that became known to me in anticipation of the experience we would be sharing in the borderlands. They were elicited from the conversations each teacher had with me and with the group during the months of preparation as we conversed and corresponded together. The form in which I choose to tell them is my form and the titles I give them are my titles. As researcher, I narratively analyzed the field notes I had created and attempted to capture several of the ways each of us are in our worlds. These then became the 'stories to live by' that are presented in this chapter.

For the sake of providing some sense of direction, allow me to again briefly describe the two chapters that follow this one. After my telling of our 'stories to live by,' I write 'stories from the borderlands.' These are the stories of our experience in the inquiry space, the 'during' stories. Again, there are too many stories to tell so I have chosen to tell only four. My reasons for doing so are offered at the beginning of the next chapter. These stories serve as "disruption and essential counterpoint" (Steedman, 1986, p. 22) to our 'stories to live by.' They, as well as the many stories I do not tell, are the experiences that have the potential to shift our identities.

Once the 'stories from the borderlands' are told, I will retell each of the 'stories to live by' that I first present in this chapter. They are the same stories for we are the same people but each story has shifted in some way because of our experience in the

borderlands. It is my intent that, through the telling of who we are before being in the borderlands and then the retelling of who we are after being in the borderlands, we will be able to detect the shifts that have occurred in our identities. Narrative renderings of our lives have the potential to demonstrate how experience becomes educational.

> Deliberately storying and restorying one's life ... is, therefore, a fundamental method of personal (and social) growth: It is a fundamental quality of education. So-called narrative research builds on this process of growth. Narrative method is the description and restorying of the narrative structure of educational experience. A researcher's narrative account of an educational event may constitute a restorying of the event, and to that extent it is on a continuum with the processes of reflective restorying that go on in each of our educational lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991, p. 259).

Ken's 'Stories to Live By'

Preface: 'Knowing Ken'

I am having difficulty recalling the details. Twenty years is a long time. I was a student at a theological college in Vancouver and the January inter-session seminar I chose to take was on education. Ken was my professor. He had been a teacher for several years in the city from which we both came. Although I had never met him there, I knew of him. He was considered an excellent teacher and a great thinker. So there I was – a young seminarian trying to determine the direction studies and work life would take, and Ken began to talk about his passion for teaching.

The seminar was about integrating our faith and educational thought, the focus of his doctoral studies. He presented various educational philosophies and I remember him being especially passionate about Ivan Illich and John Dewey. I remember being pushed to think about how and where the ideas of these and other philosophers did and did not intersect with aspects of Christian faith. I also recall Ken's sense of fun mixed in with our wonderings about difficult questions. His jokes poked fun at himself, not at others, like the day he confessed that he worried about becoming bald because he was sure that it was his great hair that allowed him to get and keep his teaching jobs. I can picture him in the front of our classroom – his right index finger vertical across his lips, his thumb holding his chin, his left arm holding up his right elbow, and his eyes searching for his thoughts on a particular posed dilemma. I still have my notes from that seminar, a tangible tribute to my respect for him. Most of all, I remember him talking about wanting to become a really good teacher.

A few years later, I accepted my first teaching position at a high school in Regina. I had been hired the Friday before school started on Tuesday after the September long weekend. When I walked into the staff room on that first day, I saw Ken sitting on one of the couches talking to some other colleagues. I had not seen him since seminary but his presence was reassuring. My very first teaching day, my very first chance to have classes

and students of my very own – the excitement and the anxiety were overwhelming. In the midst of these extremes was the gift of the presence of a person to whom I attribute helping me discover some of my desire to become a teacher. I do remember feeling that this must be a good place and that I would be all right.

That moment in the staff room when I saw Ken was truly one of those remarkable moments in life. Ken just happened to be in the staff room on that day visiting with his former colleagues. Ken had left that school in order take a position at a seminary a few years previous but continued his friendship with several teachers on the staff. We both taught in that school but at different times. Our life paths continued to intersect during those years in Regina.

Six years ago, another intersection occurred. We reconnected in Edmonton. Since then, we have had the opportunity to work together on a committee regarding issues in education and we, and our families, became part of the same faith community.

I. 'Becoming'

We have known each other for a long time and Ken still wants to become a really good teacher. He also wants to become a good person. He and I talk about this – about 'becoming' – for ourselves, our kids, our colleagues and our students.

> There are people who adopt certain mannerisms for long enough and eventually it does become them. I think that there are teachers who can no longer break out of the thing that [they started doing]. Initially it was just mannerisms or ways of behaving or a mode they went into when they started to teach and eventually, they just become that. …
>
> There is this really bad movie you may have seen – Meryl Streep and somebody, *Death Becomes Her*. It got me thinking about the word 'becomes' because we say about a job or, maybe, even that red shirt. It becomes you. It fits you. Like when I look at these kids who experiment with these various uniforms they put on for about two weeks at a time in high school. Well, at some point, this thing could become you. You could be Goth for one party for a Saturday night. You could be a Goth for a month. And you are not a Goth but if you are a Goth for three years or five years, it becomes you. Not just in the sense that it seems to fit you – that's who you become. … So this movie title got me thinking about some of the students I have taught. They just say they are mad at their parents and they are mad at the school and they are just mad at this and that. I think I see a forty year old really grouchy person here. This isn't just your parents. This is you. It's becoming you and you should, while you have time, change (Individual Conversation, May 8, 2001).

Ken recalls a time in his growing up years when he began thinking about what kind of a person he intentionally wanted to become. He thinks that this process was probably initiated in reaction to some adults in his life and in reverence to others.

> [There were] a number of people who were very gracious Christian people in my background and a number who were nasty, close-minded, vicious unchristian Christians. I don't know how old I was but at some point I must have decided that I didn't want to be like that. … There were maybe objective things that were worth complaining about but I didn't want to be like that simple world where I am right and everybody else is wrong (Individual Conversation, June 20, 2001).

Ken is able to look back over his teaching life and talk about the kind of teacher he at one time wished he could be. But, becoming someone else did not fit his sense of himself. He talks about wanting to be like this person or that person but finally coming to accept and be content in being just who he was as a teacher.

> I used to be [ashamed of who I was]. I don't know if you know this friend of mine… He's so good. His lectures were so organized. He taught theology and I taught general studies. We were childhood friends. … I was always jealous that he was so organized and his students' notebooks probably looked like his ring binder at the end of the course. For several years I struggled with this… I wish I could teach like him. He has these crisp lectures and under Roman Numeral III Part II, he'd be able to tell you how many points there were and that is how many points the students would have down. And I finally just became content who I am. … Lockerbie wrote this article about twenty years ago about teaching who we are. And when I read it, I thought, 'yeah, that's what I want to do.' … That was the first time I had seen that phrase, teaching who we are, and I thought, 'yeah, I like that.' … I teach who I am. … And I finally just became content who I am (Individual Conversation, May 8, 2001).

Ken's story of 'becoming' is at once a story of his coming to be content in his own way of doing things, his own style, his own way of approaching people and situations – of being himself, as well as being a story of intentionally trying on characteristics and habits and ways of being that he admires in others. This story expresses both a comfort that comes from acceptance as well as an urgency at wanting to become even more. These aspects are not discrepant. They are not even in tension. They are a both/and. And because they are so compatible, 'becoming' is a 'story to live by' that allows Ken to continue approaching life with vitality and deep enjoyment.

II. 'Finding Place'

A second story that emerged was that of 'finding place.' "I don't feel at home there (at his school). I don't feel at home in Africa" (Individual Conversation, May 8, 2001). For Ken, it is a story that allows for reflection on what aspects of his worlds do and do not make him feel 'at home.' It is a story that helps him to clarify where he does and does not feel as though he belongs.

> I am in the school that has a worldview about a millimeter wide, that's how I feel most days. … I am always griping about these two groups, these two circles and I am in the outer circle on the staff. … I am one of the ones who refuses to [talk the

> Christian language correctly] and, consequently, I am in the second circle. But students always tell me, 'you are in our first circle.' I think, 'that's quite a trade off. I value this trust that you guys have but I would sometimes like to have some legitimacy with my colleagues' (Individual Conversation, May 8, 2001).

Ken's first trip to Kenya helped him to recognize that the 'place' he desires to find is not so much a physical place as much as it is a place of perspective.

> Why do I want to do this work? Well, I know why – cause I want to show them (his students in Canada) the stuff I saw. I had to change a water pump a couple of months ago. It cost me $239 about $80 of which was labour and the rest was a part. And I thought, '$80 in Canada is what 45 minutes of work at Kliebur's automotive cost – 45 minutes of employment I provided with $80.' I thought, '$200 gives a lifetime of employment in Kenya.' I would like some people to see this, some young people to see that $200 can make a lifetime of difference to one family.
>
> I presented this in a class on poverty, several weeks ago after some [student] presentations on poverty. A number of students said, 'we can't do anything.' They were cynical. Twenty year olds are cynical and the fifty year old is hopeful, right? They said, 'there is nothing we can do. It's a global system.' It's NIKE and it's the Quebec City thing. I said, 'in fact there are enough people in this room that you could organize an alternative channel to get bananas from Ecuador to Edmonton and I would pay $1.50 a pound if you could get the money back to the people who grow them.' I said, 'there are enough of you to do that.' They said, 'no, the system is too big.' The system! You could get $200 to Nairobi, circumvent the entire system and somebody could start a business and provide a lifetime income in one family. And a number of students said, 'what good is that – one family!'
>
> Anyway, I want some people to see this stuff and see what happens outside the UN and outside the World Bank when changes are brought in the small scale. … When I got to some of these projects (in Nairobi), I was served tea by a woman who got robbed that night but nevertheless, that had been funded by this very small $5000 micro-bank that gets 43 families permanently employed. It's an amazing thing when you think about what $5000 does here – when you have a car accident, or you might spend that much on flooring or carpets. And here it is – 43 families. So that had quite an effect on me (Individual Conversation, May 8, 2001).

The story of 'finding place' raises the reality that, for Ken, justice plays a significant part in his being able to feel 'at home.' And it is not only justice. 'Finding place' is about priorities, and personal integrity and about putting his energies into and making decisions about people and places that will make steps towards equality and fairness and dignity. 'Finding place' has to do with finding perspective.

III. 'Living Fully'

Ken has often said to me that one of his goals in life is to set foot on all seven continents of the world. He loves to travel and yet he also loves to stay at home and watch movies and make wooden furniture. Another one of his 'stories to live by' is the desire to experience life fully wherever it may be found.

> I am an adventurer. I do seek adventure. For me, I will get out there and challenge myself and find out what is going to happen to me in these circumstances. On the other hand, when I say, 'yes' to things and then six months later the time has come to do it, I think, 'why did I say yes?' I could just be sitting in one of these chairs right now if I hadn't volunteered to give this thing (a workshop or a class). Likewise with Africa, I'm looking at it now and I am supposed to write this book for Newfoundland, and I want to have holidays and I want to build this and so on. It is not resentment. It is just that I kick myself for saying 'yes' and making the decision. ...
>
> But I do have a sense of, 'could this work there?' Could this work in a different cultural setting? And I don't know if other teachers don't want that. I hope they do. I think about my colleagues. I hope they want to put themselves in settings, even if it is an M. Ed. at U. of A. I hope they would put themselves in settings where they would be tested. Or, if they would even swap jobs with somebody at another school for a year. Just to get something new in their life.
>
> I do sense that as a profession, we are real grumblers about getting bored. I mean we are overworked on the one side but we get bored with the same stuff. But there are some obvious ways to introduce some new things into your life – propose a new course, exchange jobs with somebody for a year, go to Australia for a year, go to Africa (Individual Conversation, May 8, 2001).

'Living fully' is so much a part of who Ken is that living alongside teachers who do not approach life this way is puzzling to him. He wants his colleagues to have a taste of this fullness, not because he thinks that they should be like him, but because his 'story to live by' of 'living fully' brings curiosity and texture and creativity to his experience of his world. Ken desires to experience these gifts that 'living fully' brings and he hopes that others will be given these gifts as well.

> I love seeing other things and I love going other places and I want to be on all seven continents so this is just part of that adventuring thing. Anyway, I glued my old passport into my journal about two weeks ago. I got a new passport and I wrote this little paragraph about thanking God that I was able to do all this stuff. Go to these places. See these paintings that I saw in England and Scotland and Holland and New York and meet these people. Eat this food – some of which is good! Life is out there you know.
>
> Jo-Ann (Ken's wife) had a colleague in Regina about 25 years ago or 20 years ago, and she asked why he was going there. I forget where but he was going on holidays. He said, 'because when I go on holidays, I don't want to see anybody poor and I want to eat good steak' (laughter). I thought, 'you just wiped out about

> 150 countries pal. You are never going to see a whole bunch of places that you could see otherwise.' There is an attitude, right? I want to eat good steak and I don't want to see poor people (Individual Conversation, May 8, 2001).

For Ken, the attitude expressed by Jo-Ann's colleague is about retreating from life as it is and living a fantasy for a time. It is the very opposite to 'living fully.' Ken's 'story to live by' of 'living fully' is about entering into all possible experiences that come his way and even about creating his own possibilities and opportunities so that he can experience life in its entirety. "Life is out there," and Ken is one who desires to embrace it completely.

IV. 'Understanding Difference'

Another 'story to live by' that emerged in my conversations with Ken prior to going to Kenya is the story of trying to understand how people get along with one another. He has thought a lot about this, thinking that has arisen from his own life experiences as well as his graduate studies and his teaching of cultural and social values and systems.

A few years ago, Ken wrote a textbook entitled *Worldviews: The challenge of choice* (1996). It is intended for high school religion and ethics classes and, in it, he articulates his thinking about responding to difference by presenting a continuum model (p. 27). This model challenges dominant thinking that the only way and the most valued way to respond to difference is to be tolerant. He proposes that responses to difference can range from annihilation to assimilation to tolerance to respect to celebration. Conversion, the decision to change to another's perspective, may be the ultimate end of the continuum (Individual Conversation, June 20, 2001).

The model has become part of Ken's way of thinking about the world around him. Whether speaking of how people of various religious backgrounds or of various hobby interests relate, Ken reflects on the options in terms of this model.

> I recall very early in my time in Latin America, I was very frustrated at first as to how things were closed in the afternoons. I think we were trying to straighten out an air ticket or something and we had to wait until four o'clock. But I was there about a month and by the time I left, I thought, 'I like this.' I came back here [to Canada] and it is 35 degrees out and every one is roaring around trying to get a bunch of work done and I think, 'Let's go have a nap. It will be cooler at four o'clock.' So we question the other first. … My first stance is to be critical and my second stance is, well, sociology says, from their point of view, 'this makes complete sense.' … To encounter difference, if I were teaching a sociology class, is to say, the first thing you have to remember is that this makes sense to them (Individual Conversation, June 20, 2001).

Ken has served on several committees that seek to propose different approaches to Religious Education with people of varying religious faiths. These have been

opportunities that have helped him come to understand that the world really does look different from another's perspective. His friendship with a Sikh man is one such instance.

> We were waiting to go in to make our little presentation to the commission and he was asking me about what kind of Christian I was. He said, 'are you the kind that follows the Pope or are you the other kind?' I thought it was a very interesting schemata. From his point of view, we (Christians) are about a millimeter apart (laughter). … Maybe it is because I have studied church history and so on and I know about the variations not just in Protestantism but in Catholicism as well. But from his point of view we are about a millimeter apart. And I thought that was interesting. He has this very simple classification and in fact I don't have any classifications for Sikhism and I am sure there are. But it was interesting to have this guy as a colleague. … It was good for me to meet him (Individual Conversation, June 20, 2001).

Ken lives this 'story to live by' of 'understanding difference' daily. As he encounters people and situations, as he enters into conversations and reflects on his own way of being in the world, he tries both to understand the difference that is around him from the other's vantage point and to think about how he wants to respond to that difference.

V. 'Offering Possibilities'

'Offering possibilities' – the desire to give others the opportunity to discover whatever the 'next thing' might be for them, is another 'story to live by' that emerged from my conversations with Ken prior to going to Kenya. I have known Ken to invite some of his students to work with him and to accompany him when he presents at workshops or conferences. He has organized some of his students at various times to submit articles on various subjects to journals for publication. Going to Kenya was another opportunity to include friends and colleagues in an experience he was committed to having.

> When I announced this Africa thing, I wanted to draw anybody who wanted to come and should have come. … When I think about colleagues who I wish would come, I think some would get a grander vision than our petty little school that has identified that it will go to the wall over two things – gum and hats (laughter). I think, if I were the devil trying to way-lay the school for a year, I'd call a diabolical council meeting and say, 'what can you think of to way-lay this Christian school for a year?' Some demon would say 'gum.' And another demon would say 'hats.' 'Okay, good. Done with that school.' You only have to check every Christian school every five years. Just leave them gum and hats and then they are off track for five years at a time. I wish my principal, my vice-principal could come to Africa and they would say, 'I don't think gum and hats are the things worth going to the wall for any more.' … Anyway, that is what I wish for my colleagues, that they could go and come back with this gratitude for the

> equipment we have, gratitude for all the material goods we have, gratitude for the stability we have in our country (Individual Conversation, June 20, 2001).

Sometimes, the possibility, the 'next thing,' that Ken desires for someone, is something that Ken has come to hold dear and he hopes will become significant for this person as well. And sometimes, that 'next thing' is a hidden talent or a buried passion or a life direction or even a 'story to live by' that will surprise and delight them both.

VI. 'Having Faces'

Ken expressed knowledge he has come to hold regarding what motivates people to shift their thinking – it is about having faces and not just understanding issues. "Suddenly there was a face and the wounds on this face were so deep that these guys changed" (Individual Conversation, June 20, 2001).

> I have been teaching ethics since about the late '80's. And every time, I have seen a student do a paper on some controversial problematic area – say hi-tech reproduction. Often the student comes in very conservative, partly because of the places where I have taught ethics. They say, 'this is wrong. We are messing with God's plan or something.' They do the paper. They do the research and they have to present it as part of a panel – that's how I do my ethics class. They are on a panel. They give their little blurb and then they are on deck for about an hour for questions from the class. Then I read the paper later that week cause they hand their paper in [to me] the time of the panel and here is this paper where the conclusion [states], 'in the course of doing my research, I came across several couples who were unable to have children.' They now have names and faces, right. They say, 'when I started this paper, I thought it was just – blanket. I thought it was wrong and now I am open to this, this and this.' Isn't that interesting. As soon as you find out something about it, a few details about why this is on the table, students change. 'Ah, it's because people who really want to have children can't. People with names. People who have tried for years, spent money,' etc. And suddenly you move. …
>
> I lived near 4th and Albert. That is where I was raised. And that was the first neighbourhood in Regina for Natives to move into when they came from the Qu'appelle area or wherever. Some people in Regina now call it the 'reservation.' They say, 'don't walk in there.' Don't walk in there! I delivered papers to every house. I had eight different paper routes between Elphinstone and Albert. What's the deal? I could tell you every address. What do you mean, 'don't walk in there? Some of those people still owe me money and they're white!' Just hearing all this racism and what I heard at [the school we taught at] as well about having aboriginal students in my classes. Again, they are faces. It's not a category anymore. It's faces (Individual Conversation, June 20, 2001).

'Having faces' has been important to Ken and this is why it is one of his 'stories to live by.' He approaches people as people – people who are trying to do the best they can with what they have, people who have jobs, people who love their kids, people who

have come to see the world a certain way, people who want the best out of life. He teaches hoping that his students, before framing their opinions on an issue, will first see the faces. He lives doing the same.

Dana's 'Stories to Live By'

Preface: 'Knowing Dana'

I have come to know Dana through our mutual involvement in our church community in Edmonton over the last twelve years even though I feel I have a prairie connection with her that reaches way back before then – she too was born and grew up in Saskatchewan. Although we do not share a historic friendship, we share a geographic landscape. Our childhoods are dotted with common places in the northern part of that province. I can picture where she went to school, where she went on summer vacations, and the restaurant where she met her husband Grant. My parents have known her in-laws for years through church circles. We have layers of connection that are deeper than our twelve-year relationship, layers that continue to surprise us as they illuminate our growing friendship.

One of these layers is Dana's and my teaching and academic life in Edmonton. Although we have never taught in the same school, I have looked to her expertise in working with students of special needs. Dana has co-authored several resources for our school district, has resourced many teachers through professional development opportunities and has worked closely with mutual colleagues. And, she has pursued studies and experiences in academic areas that are of mutual interest. While she and I have explored these areas together, she and Wendy have explored the areas of Children's Literature and Literacy. They too are close friends and colleagues.

I. 'Embracing the World'

Dana exudes the spirit of adventure – she is one whom I experience as being ready and willing to 'go for it.' Her first trip abroad was a year's adventure in Australia that she had after her first year of studies in Education at the University of Saskatchewan. Then, during her post-graduate year, she travelled to Ethiopia for several weeks to visit a friend who was teaching in an ex-patriot school there. Her exploration of the world did not stop when she graduated, started teaching in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and married Grant. In the last eight years, they, together, have travelled extensively visiting Japan, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and India. And, Dana asserts, "I wanted to teach overseas – that was something I had always envisioned myself doing" (Individual Conversation, May 9, 2001).

Dana expresses a thoughtful acceptance that different cultures do things differently.

> I [am typically] not able to figure out moments where I responded with, 'wow, this is so different.' I feel that I have always thought, 'oh, this is how they do things.' There is the caste system in India and you may not agree with it but that is how life is. Or you go to Japan and you are aware of the extreme level of service that you get. There is actually a woman who stands at the bottom of an escalator and says the same phrase over and over again in Japanese, which is basically to watch your step when you get off the escalator. These women are paid to tell every person who comes down the escalator to watch their step. … I think, 'well this is bizarre but this is how they do it here.' … Like, did you know that in Thailand it is impolite to point the bottom of your feet at anybody? All of these experiences reinforce for me that we all don't do things the same way (Individual Conversation, June 18, 2001).

But even striking differences can become commonplace if you stay long enough and are willing to try something new. Dana recalls the moment, in Australia, when she realized that the strange had become familiar.

> I remember when we first landed in Sydney and we tried to find the hostel. We arrived at the hostel and we walked up to register and there was this great big burly man with a beard and a moustache. He started talking to us and it was like he was talking another language even though it was English with this thick Australian accent. I think we were there probably five or six months when I distinctly remember getting up one day and sitting around the breakfast table and I suddenly realized that they didn't have an accent any more. I didn't notice any difference any more. … That was kind of like a light bulb experience (Individual Conversation, June 18, 2001).

To embrace the world means to allow it to be what it is and to enter in anyway. This is Dana's way of opening her arms and 'embracing the world.'

II. 'Living in the Tensions'

To 'enter in anyway' is not always easy and is not always smooth but it has rewarded Dana with experiences that she considers rich with learning and with living life to the full. It is about being willing to live in the tensions when they come and wherever they may be found. 'Living in the tensions' is part of who Dana is. It is one of her 'stories to live by.'

Dana recalls a situation in India that is illustrative of 'living in the tensions.'

> We were walking along the street and an Indian gentleman approached us. He had a letter and he asked if we would be willing to read it. It was from some tourists he had met in Jaipur but it was all written in English and he couldn't read it. He hoped we would we be willing to sit down and have tea with him and read this letter to him. For whatever reason we said, 'yes.' I know you have to be careful but he looked like a really nice guy. So we went and sat down and read

this letter. It was from a German couple, some other travellers. As I talk I'll remember their names. So we went through the letter and then he invited us to his home. He saw our hesitation and he assured us that it would be fine. He would pick us up and take us to his home. So we said we would do it. We debated that whole night – 'Should we? Shouldn't we?' We did and we were really glad we did.

He came with his scooter. There we are the three of us on his scooter. He's driving and I'm on and Grant's on and we're going through Jaipur to his home. We met his wife and his daughter. He had a little girl who was probably in Grade One. She had to bring out her printing and show me. His wife painted Rajput miniatures, those tiny miniatures – 3" X 5" or 4" X 6". They are painted in vivid colours and often with lots of gold. They depict scenes from royalty. They are quite lovely. We offered to buy two of them. Eight years later and they are still in the 'to-be-framed' pile (laughter). They are lovely. She was asked to do a little show but being female, she was not allowed to sign her name to the pieces because it would be inappropriate for a male to see her name and want to contact her or something like that. There was a hotel shop that wanted to show some of her work but she wasn't able to sign it. She was able to do the show but she would have to sign on the back or sign through her husband's name – I can't remember exactly.

But I remember thinking, 'oh, that's not right.' … There was nothing that I could really do but I do remember thinking, 'I don't like this.' … I am not entirely sure what she felt about the fact about not owning her own art work. … [I wonder] whether she was very frustrated or not or whether she simply saw it as, 'this is how it is.' I don't know. It wasn't really an open topic for discussion [but I wished I had asked] (Individual Conversation, June 18, 2001).

I always wished that while we were there (in India), my nature was different and that I felt more comfortable messing up or screwing up or saying the wrong thing. Not in a negative way but there were often opportunities where I could have had more conversation with people. … This summer (in Kenya) I have another opportunity to push myself and ask more questions and get involved in the dialogue. It isn't just how I am in the context of another culture. … It is how I am just sitting around the table with other friends. Being more comfortable and curious in conversations is uncharted territory (Individual Conversation, June 18, 2001).

For Dana, being willing to live in the tensions brings new possibilities, possibilities that come with some risk. Tensions between 'playing it safe' and 'living dangerously' in travels and in conversation emerge as opportunities for growth for Dana.

I have always found it fascinating when I hear that people have lived their lives somewhere else or experience life so differently. I know that I experience some fascination and some curiosity. … But it is also not my nature to ask those kinds of questions and to get into those kinds of discussions (Individual Conversation, June 18, 2001).

And yet, Dana asserts, "I would like to learn how to get more into that dialogue" (Individual Conversation, June 18, 2001).

Dana has experienced tensions in her teaching contexts as well. This is not surprising for she brings all of who she is, all of her 'stories to live by' with her when she enters her school community. She brings the fact that she is related to a woman of aboriginal descent and the orientation to welcome all people of various ethnicities. She brings her expectations of herself and her colleagues to be highly motivated professionals. She remembers one school context in particular wherein these values revealed tensions that exist outside of her on the school landscape. It was a school that had several aboriginal teachers and aboriginal student teachers.

> The one aboriginal teacher that I remember most clearly was a hard-working elementary teacher. She was amazing.
>
> And then there was another one who team-taught with a non-aboriginal teacher. When the kids had her, the non-aboriginal teacher, … in the morning, it was very structured, very routine. And then in the afternoon, there was no structure. It was a very different style of teaching and the kids figured out when they could do what.
>
> Another thing I remember was when we had student teachers come out. There was always a fine line. I never had a student teacher because I was in Special Ed. But, it was very difficult for those teachers who happened to have an aboriginal student teacher who was not prepared to put in all of the extra effort. If that was the case and comments were made to that effect, those teachers were called racist. They couldn't call a spade a spade without it being thought of as being a comment on culture.
>
> My cousin, I can't believe I forgot to tell you this, my cousin, Maggie, is Native and was adopted. But I never saw her as anything other than my cousin. You knew her skin was darker and she was one of my older cousins. But she was obviously part of the family so that is probably why I never thought of her as different.
>
> But with the teachers, there was always a fine line that needed to be walked – how feedback was given and how criticism was directed. … I just remember one specific student teacher who did not perform to the level that was expected. There was a lot of work and she seemed to think that she could get by without doing it. When the evaluation happened, they called a spade a spade and the teacher did not pass. … I just remember it making people angry because they felt if it had been a non-aboriginal teacher, then those comments were fine. He or she may not have liked it but at least you were able to say it. What seemed to really make people mad is that someone would play into a stereotype as a way of getting by without having to do the expected work. I think that was what made people even angrier (Individual Conversation, May 9, 2001).

In addition to tensions caused by inconsistent standards and cultural differences in one particular school context, Dana has also been attentive to the tensions between school contexts, like the differences between the affluent schools and the schools at "the bottom

of the pecking order" (Individual Conversation, May 9, 2001). Dana has taught in both and, again, Dana acknowledges that it is recognizing the tensions that offer an enlarged vision of and significant learning from the worlds she is in.

> This one school was a school at which nobody wanted to end up. And yet, had I only taught in the school where I was initially placed which was at the opposite end of the economic scale, I would have missed out on the realization of just what a difference a significant adult can make in the lives of kids. … These kids – anything you gave them, anything in terms of knowledge, anything in terms of a treat for work well done was so well received and they were so thankful for it because it was something that they didn't have otherwise. New books would come in and all the students would be excited. I think I would have missed seeing this if I hadn't taken that placement. It was such a blessing to have that excitement and appreciation at that time in my career. I had a wonderful group of students in my first school, the ones that I started teaching with. They were an amazing group of students too but I wouldn't have seen the delightfulness and the thankfulness in learning that I did see from the students at the school where nobody wanted to teach (Individual Conversation, May 9, 2001).

At the affluent schools she has taught in, it seems that there has been an on-going debate over their ultimate purpose – "what are we about here – about kids or about saving paper?" (Individual Conversation, May 9, 2001). Without exploring our teaching lives in various contexts, without putting ourselves in places where we might be stretched, it seems as though teachers become focused only on survival and do not "think beyond" (Individual Conversation, May 9, 2001).

Dana continues to compare her experiences in the affluent schools with those in the community based schools where she has taught.

> [They have] kids that were, in many cases, so needy. That was an inner city school. You were dealing with many, many kids, both Native and non-Native, who were very low income. It didn't matter what you did for them – they were so wanting. They wanted to know someone cared about them. It didn't matter what you did. They latched on. …
>
> One [aboriginal student] that jumps to my mind was Sean. He was this bright little guy, Grade Two but could word call at Grade Seven level. Or kids who wouldn't come to school because they didn't have enough money to take their clothes to the laundry and they didn't have clean clothes to wear. Or kids who would come in forty below weather. They would have towels wrapped around their necks and pinned like scarves because they didn't have scarves (Individual Conversation, May 9, 2001).

Living in the midst of the tensions has allowed Dana to gain perspective on what she has come to hold as important. Because she approaches her world with the 'story to live by' of 'living in the tensions,' she lives an on-going process of becoming clearer and more intentional with the values she chooses to hold.

Trusting strangers, taking risks in conversations, recognizing the expectations of competing cultures, being surprised at where celebrations are found and addressing the injustices of her world are all tensions she chooses to name and thereby to live amongst. She also chooses to live in the tension of how her teaching life and her faith commitments go together.

> It was interesting to see the reaction from the Grade Nine students. [There were] just facial kinds of things when I mentioned that I was going with teachers from my church through Carey Seminary to work with teachers from Africa Brotherhood Churches. It wasn't that they wrote me off right away but there was a reaction to the church aspect of this. Those words aren't something we hear in schools. ... Sometimes we, I, avoid that because of the reaction. ... I could easily just say that I am going to work with a group of Kenyan teachers (Individual Conversation, May 9, 2001).

But she didn't. Dana is committed to living in the 'life-giving', 'nuance-honouring', and 'perspective-creating' tensions of experience. It is part of who she is.

III. 'Learning Confidence'

Approaching life with the 'story to live by' of 'living in the tensions' takes a lot of confidence. It is difficult for anyone to live in the midst of ambiguity and competing values if a person does not also have a personal sense of strength. With Dana, I am continually in awe of the confidence she does exhibit in the stories of her life that she has chosen to share with me and I am also struck with her desire to continue to grow more in this aspect of her identity. When she expresses her desire to enter in more fully to conversations with others, to be more curious and to be more "comfortable messing up or screwing up or saying the wrong thing," Dana is telling me both her 'story to live by' of 'living in the tensions' and of 'learning confidence' (Individual Conversation, June 18, 2001).

Approaching life with the desire to gain more confidence is evident in Dana's story of coming to choose her career path. Dana did not grow up with the desire to always want to be a teacher. Throughout high school she had the idea of pursuing medicine but having the confidence to do so was a concern.

> [T]here was a confidence issue. I did very well in high school – I graduated with the fourth highest marks in the class without really trying but I didn't have enough confidence to believe that I could do it. Certainly, my university marks make me think that I was right. I went on a tour. It was very common to do a tour of the university during my last year of high school and I had signed up for three faculties that I was interested in. One was medicine and I was so nervous about this whole thing and I was so sure that no one would accept me that I didn't go. I didn't even have the courage to go and check it out.

> But I did go to the education faculty. I had had it on my list. And I distinctly remember the tour through education at the U. of S. in the special education department. It has its whole separate area, the two-way glass, the teaching rooms and things. And I can remember going in there and thinking, 'oh, this feels right.' And I decided right then and there that I would go into Special Education. That was what I was going to do. Did I make the right decision? I still wonder some days. ... We probably all feel the same way. Did I always want to be a teacher? No (Individual Conversation, June 18, 2001).

I sense that Dana tells this story to show me a time in her life where she lacked confidence – she did not investigate the faculty of medicine. But I also sense that this story is about the confidence she does have, even then. When she experienced the special education department, she exhibited the confidence it takes to recognize place when it is encountered.

Approaching life with the 'story to live by' of desiring to learn confidence, again, does not mean that she does not already have a sense of confidence in who she is. I see this as she thinks about going to Kenya.

> I do a lot of teaching of adults through workshops and things and so I wonder sometimes if I am going into this (teaching in Kenya) with a little too much comfort. I am used to being in that role. This will be a different audience and I wonder if the way I naturally talk in presentations or present myself is going to work. Is it going to be effective? ... What will everybody think about me? ... Will it fit in this particular context? And am I kidding myself in being a little bit more sure? Because I have done so much, I don't feel uncomfortable. But will I get up there and go, 'oh my goodness, this isn't working?' I have always done it this way but it isn't working. And where do you go from there? I have always been very fortunate and had kind audiences. I am sure this audience will be very friendly, probably even more friendly. Even if the audiences in my past haven't been very friendly, they have been very gracious (Individual Conversation, June 18, 2001).

For Dana, being and continuing to grow in confidence is another aspect of who she is. It is another one of her 'stories to live by.'

IV. 'Attending Closely'

Dana is very attuned to the moment. She notices – people, colours, tastes, faces, details. It is one of the ways she lives her 'story to live by' of 'embracing the world' as well. Like the stories told above of Sean, the Grade Two student who could word call at a Grade Seven level, and the students who came to school with scarves made from towels. She was a little shy admitting that this story of hers was also at work when, after meeting Grant for the first time, she knew he was perfect. It is an attention that provides her with, and those with whom she shares, a quality of life that is rich and textured and alive. 'Attending closely' is one of her 'stories to live by.'

Dana recalled an incident at the year-end Awards Celebration to which she was especially attentive.

> All of the students are called up and then one by one they cross the stage – a typical awards ceremony. One of the young ladies is Muslim and she had her scarf over her head and her traditional dress which she wears all the time. So she is standing there and about to go up next. She is shaking her head trying get the message across [to the presenter] that she can't shake hands. I am sitting where I can see this happening – trying to get the message to him as well. And he caught it but he was kicking himself the next day because he thought he should have known. Other students with similar religious beliefs were fine with shaking hands so we talked about this student as being part of a more conservative family or religious persuasion. It all went very fine. But I think she was trying to help him so he didn't look silly with his hand extended in front of a gym full of people. … I wasn't sure [at first] what it was that she was trying to say to him. I wasn't quite sure what the message was even though I could see her doing it. He obviously got it and then when she came up and there was no hesitation, 'oh, of course, that is what she is trying to tell him.' That's her faith and her religion. Do I necessarily agree? It doesn't matter (Individual Conversation, June 18, 2001).

Living life with the 'story to live by' of 'attending closely' means that Dana is often imagining what she would feel or how she would respond or what she would do if she was in the other's circumstance. 'Attending closely' demonstrates to me a sense of compassion that I greatly admire.

I am very sure that this 'story to live by' is one of the reasons why Dana is such a good teacher. The interactions she describes with her Special Education students are ones in which she is trying to always figure out what it is that is causing this student some difficulty in learning and then what it is that she can create to address this struggle. Her commitment to this dynamic often puts her in awkward positions with some of her colleagues and some of the students' parents. It is a good thing that one of her 'stories to live by' is of 'living in the tensions' because her attentiveness reveals so many of them.

> Well, just as an example. Today, I am talking to my kids about test taking strategies on multiple choice exams. We are practicing high-lighting key words in questions. And, we had been practicing how to approach exam questions: Circling the ones you know and putting a question mark beside the ones you don't know so you can quickly go back and find them. One of my students puts his hand up and says, 'we aren't allowed to write on the test booklets.' And I said, 'oh, well, we'll see about that.' So I fire off an e-mail to all the staff and I get this one response. Most of the responses were quite positive but I get one response – 'oh, we can't possibly write on the booklet because we keep them from year to year.'... I went to my principal to ask, 'how hard can I push this?' And she said, 'you push this as hard as you need to.'

> One of the questions that [my principal] came up with was, and she wasn't being negative, she just wanted to bring up the other point of view: 'How are we going to deal with it if another student comes up and says, 'how come those students get to write on the booklet? That's a really good strategy. It works for me. How come they can? I want to do it too.' [My principal] then said, 'well, we'll have to deal with it then and there.' But she's hoping some teachers will bend the rules and say, 'fine' (Individual Conversation, June 18, 2001).

Our group's planning and preparation for going to Kenya was the benefactor of Dana's story of herself as attentive. She thoroughly and competently guided us towards a comprehensive curriculum plan for the second week of teaching that elicited and honoured the significant contributions made by Wendy and Larry. It was the demonstration of this expertise that made Ken respond in awe, "this is all the stuff I never got in my B. Ed.!" (Group Conversation, June 13, 2001) and in bewilderment, "you guys, this is nuts!" (Group Conversation, March 14, 2001). To this, Dana responded, "I have thought about that. I could be on the hill at the folk festival instead" (Group Conversation, March 14, 2001).

It is as if living the 'story to live by' of being attentive often puts Dana in a dilemma of some kind – helping the student and the teacher at the Awards Ceremony, acting on what she believes is good for her students in the face of some opposition by her colleague, and even recognizing multiple activities which bring her joy. The 'story to live by' of 'attending closely' brings with it many possibilities from which to choose.

Larry's 'Stories To Live By'

Preface: 'Knowing Larry'

Of the five of us, Larry is the only teacher whom I had never met prior to the beginnings of the Kenya project. Larry and the other teachers had never met either. With him too, however, there are connections that exist between us that reinforce for me the inter-relatedness of life. The most obvious are that Larry was also born in Saskatchewan and we have mutual friends in both our church and teaching lives. A little less obvious and yet very intriguing is the emerging connection of being from the prairie and being an adventurer. Larry is 63 years old and has visited 61 countries. Kenya was not one of them.

I. 'Changing the World'

Larry is not sure why, but he "grew up wanting to change the world, right from the very beginning" (Individual Conversation, May 10, 2001). It is a 'story to live by' that he lived out by becoming and being a teacher.

> I think that [with] teachers, the potential is there for us to be change agents. I certainly think that I was one and wanted to be one. I think an awful lot of

> teachers are not and it really disappoints me a great deal. An awful lot of teachers are not doing much at all. [They are] just sort of treading water and maintaining a system, which I don't think is terribly great. I am more revolutionary than that (Individual Conversation, May 10, 2001).

It was not that Larry had always wanted to be a teacher. It was a decision he came to through his many varied experiences. Larry had to leave home at the age of 14 because his community did not have a high school. When he graduated, he "[r]eally, really wanted to travel and have some adventure in [his] life" so he ventured to the Arctic to work in a weather station, a suggestion that was given to him by his sister (Individual Conversation, May 10, 2001). The money saved during his two plus years up north financed his world tour. Even through all the travels done and training accomplished and family commitments made during the proceeding seven years, Larry returned to the Arctic to teach – to begin to do his part in changing the world.

The thing that struck him the most when he went to the Arctic for the first time was the injustice.

> I really felt that the Eskimo people, or the Inuit as they prefer to call themselves now, were bemused, bewildered, besought, by everything that was happening around them and they had no controls. … I suppose at that stage I was more of an observer than anything else, partly because of my position in the community (as a weather man) and my youth. I couldn't really do much about it except to smile and be friendly (Individual Conversation, May 10, 2001). It was the first time I really saw how the Native people were affected by [the bigger world encroaching on their lives] and how they very much felt like second class citizens in their own country.
>
> I was appalled at the attitudes of so many white people, of southerners, or as we were called in the north, 'others.' Yeah, we were the 'others.' In our school registers, we had Eskimo, Inuit and Others. We were all the 'others.' ... I thought that was interesting. But I couldn't believe the attitudes of the people who looked down on them and denigrated them and treated them and thought of them in negative, inferior ways (Individual Conversation, June 21, 2001).
>
> In the end, they had to say, 'this is too much.' [They needed to] want change and then pull themselves up by the bootstraps. We could help. We could be there to help in anyway but we could not change them. They would have to change themselves. The only person you can change is yourself (Individual Conversation, May 10, 2001).

Larry wonders what it was that caused him to see and to be so moved by the injustice he encountered up north. He is quite sure that being alert to injustice is a major reason for the existence of the desire to change the world 'story to live by' in his life. But from where did this alertness to it arise?

> I think part of it was the fact that my grandparents and my parents initially were well-to-do. The farming on the prairies was very productive. During World War

> I, they were selling wheat for more than they are selling it for now. It was incredible. My grandfather was worth $80,000, which in those days was a huge amount of money. Plus he owned the land. The money was what he had in the bank. When the dirty thirties came, that was all given away to support the family and so on. So I guess there was a sense of injustice to a certain degree, things needed to be righted that were wrong and I felt that I should be involved in that. ... My mom talked about trading three dozen eggs for three lemons to make some lemonade. My uncle sold a cow and got a bill from the railway because the value of the cow was not enough to cover her freight. My Dad sold 31 prime steers and got $121 for 31 prime steers. So it was pretty obvious even in the thirties that there were people who were prospering and those who weren't. It was not all bad for everybody. ... There were [and are] forces outside that are wheeling and dealing and you are a pawn in the game. That's really annoying and so many people suffer that way all over the world. I have always disliked seeing anything suffer or anybody not having a fair shake or chance or their share (Individual Conversation, May 10, 2001).

Wanting to change the world does not mean that the world is an awful place. On the contrary, Larry holds the world with incredible reverence. He sees wonders and beauty at every turn. But it can be improved or, at least, the way people use it and each other, can be improved. It is a directional orientation.

> Always, my goal has been to motivate kids to change the world and make it better. I worked hard in that direction. I have always been involved in social concerns and international concerns. ... I have always been interested in foreign affairs and global development. I really got keen on that when I was travelling, of course. When you see the situation that most people live in, you feel like you need to do something (Individual Conversation, May 10, 2001).

II. 'Being Alert'

'Being alert' might be considered another one of Larry's 'stories to live by.' Or it may perhaps simply be a sub-plot of the first 'story to live by'. His alertness to injustice is part of his 'changing the world' 'story to live by.' Desiring to change the world necessitates an attention to it and his experiences alerted him to people as well as to issues. He tells how he came to this realization through his teaching.

> Going north, I was suddenly confronted with the kids and having more exposure to them. They teach you, you know. They teach you about themselves and if you are at all open, you just have to pay attention to who they are and what they are about.
>
> I don't know if I told you this but, when I first started this class there was this little kid who came in [a few days] late to the class. And we had already been going. We had our routines and we would take bathroom breaks in the mid-morning and the mid-afternoon. And then we would have milk and a biscuit. So we had all these routines set up. So we went to the bathroom and this other

> person arrived and, in Eskimo culture, men's costumes have designs which go up and down and women have designs which go around. So I knew that. So this little kid had designs going up and down so I made sure that he went to the bathroom with the boys. One of the boys was saying, 'Simeonee doesn't belong in here.' And I thought, 'why not?' Anyway, he had a short haircut too. A few days later I got the CUM card and the second name is Mary. He was a little girl! I found out that the father had wanted a boy and when a boy wasn't born, he decided that this little girl was going to be a boy. So he started raising her as a boy. It was rather funny but it was one situation where I learned very acutely to watch very carefully for who they were and what they were about.
>
> But I often feel that I missed things too, you know. There was a little boy in that class who was just delightful. His name was Josepee. In the Eastern Arctic they will take Biblical names and 'Eskimo-ize' them by adding some syllables. Like Elizabeth is Elizapee. John is Joanasee. Luke is Lukasee and so on. Josepee was Joseph, of course. Josepee was a really neat little guy. I just really loved him. A few years ago I found out that he killed two people. He had been sexually abused, probably at the time I was teaching him. I totally missed it. I don't know how I could have known it but I wish that I had somehow. I maybe could have saved his life and other peoples' too. ... [I learned] that I needed to slow down and come down to their level and pay attention to who they were. They were more important than the subject I was teaching (Individual Conversation, May 10, 2001).

The 'story to live by' of 'being alert' for Larry is similar to Dana's 'story to live by' of 'attending closely.' They both approach the world with their senses on high alert. Dana sees beauty in faces and artwork. Larry sees beauty in flowers and birds and bugs. Dana lovingly smoothes her hand over wooden carvings and textiles. Larry hears the call of the tree frog and heads outside with his flashlight to see if he can find it. Both listen acutely to the tones of the notes sung by our Kenyan colleagues. And both notice the subtleties of interaction and see the details in circumstance. It is about paying attention. Finding these treasures and taking the time to consider them is a big part of the way they are in their worlds.

Perhaps the difference between their stories can be understood through the images that I have come to hold of each of them. The image I have of Dana in her world is that of a gardener who tends each plant, watches it grow, notices how it is responding to the changes in the soil and works towards giving it the best possible chance for health and development. My image of Larry is that of a weatherman, a picture that I am sure has arisen from his first career in the Arctic. I see him as being alert to the world outside of him. That world is huge and has a mind of its own. His desire is to come to know it as fully as he can and thus his senses are alert to its patterns and movements. He is part of that world but is just one of many creatures who have the privilege of living in its midst, a gift to which he responds with reverence.

III. 'Being Curious'

The 'story to live by' of 'being curious' may also be considered a sub-plot of the first story – that of 'changing the world' because it too, like 'being alert', is a necessary precondition for change to take place. It is this curious wonderment that Larry remembers most about his attitude towards his own schooling.

> I guess I was very fascinated by cultures because we had a very tiny little library in our school, just a few books, and I used to get out the books on various parts of the world. ... My sister and I wrote to the Australian High Commission in the 1950's to see if, the 1956 Olympics were in Australia, to see if we could possibly get a job over there (laughter). I was only sixteen and I didn't get an answer (Individual Conversation, May 10, 2001).
>
> The otherness was very strange and very interesting. I was so curious. I wanted to know about that. And I can remember saying to a friend, 'Let's go, let's go and see them.' I really wanted to travel even at that stage and trying to get someone else interested. I really couldn't understand his disinterest. He was sort of interested but at the end of the day I knew he wouldn't do it. Why? How can people not be fascinated by this (laughter)? ...
>
> People just don't know about the world and they don't care. They have the mindset of *Coronation Street* – it's me and you and the guy next door and that's about it. That's the end of my world. We met people when we lived in England, in Kent just outside London. We met people there who had never been to central London. And these were middle class people. 'Wouldn't really think of going there.' And there are people in London – *Coronation Street* type people, who lived right in the core of London but they would never go down to the center of London – never. It is a different mentality altogether. A lack of imagination and curiosity.
>
> When I did travel, I can remember a neighbour saying, 'why would you waste your money on that when you could have bought a nice car?' 'Why did you waste all that time? You could have been working all this time.' I couldn't relate to them. ... It was really strange because one of the people who said that most strongly to me was an immigrant. He had come from, I think, Poland. He had made his trip and that was it. He was there and there was no curiosity about any one else. I think his immigration was strictly from necessity and that was it. He had no curiosity about the world. It is bizarre to me. To come all that way and see what he must have seen in the intervening period in all the places he went through, and not be peeked in curiosity to go and see more? (Individual Conversation, June 21, 2001).

Larry retired from his teaching position at the end of January in 2001 but he did not retire from living the story of curiosity. When I asked him about what he hoped to learn by going to Kenya, his response was the following litany of wonderings.

> Well, cultural things for sure. How they do things. How they think. What matters to them? What their dreams are. What they wish for their country, for

> their families. How the family pattern works. How strong it is. What are the good points and bad points? What has their teacher education been like? How does it stand in comparison to ours? What will they expect of me and us? In what ways can we connect so that I can be of some use? How 'modern' are they? What cultural imperatives will get in the way? On what level can we connect? Do we share some of the same sense of humour? How do they relate to one another? That is an interesting question for me. How is their society stratified? All societies are. Will the women be too shy or deferential to me as an older male? What embarrasses them? What embarrasses the men? What embarrasses the women? How much honesty will they exhibit? ... How forthright can I be without risk of harm? I have found that it is really difficult to speak honestly with people cross-culturally sometimes. What are their fears? What protocol do they follow? How wide is their worldview? How educated in 'real' terms are they? Will our relative wealth get in the way? What are the sexual politics in their schools? How much of their obvious religiosity is genuine? How mature are they as Christians? Can I put myself in their shoes? Are some jealous of us? How will that play out if they are? Are they as enthusiastic and bright as they seem? Am I too hopeful of connecting? What will I dislike here? Will they hope for or expect a relationship after we return home? ... What is their body language? How do they communicate with their bodies? What are the limitations of their body language? What might you do that might be disturbing to them with body language? How committed are they to improving Kenyan life? What are their dreams? What do they have to work with? How big are their classes? What are other problems that impinge on their teaching? I guess that is all or at least that is all that I have so far (Individual Conversation, May 10, 2001).

Not being able to understand others' disinterest and not being able to comprehend others' lack of imagination, tells me about what Larry values. For me, the 'story to live by' of 'being curious' distinguishes Larry as a unique individual in my life. It is part of who he is and, for those of us who are given the opportunity to live alongside him for a while, it is part of what we come to appreciate and celebrate about him.

IV. 'Helping Others'

A fourth 'story to live by' which emerged from my conversations with Larry prior to going to Kenya was his desire to help others. His move to the Arctic at age 17 was indeed motivated by his longing for adventure and was also motivated by the practical plan of saving money to fund both his travel longings and his desire to help others.

> I went to the Arctic when I was 17 after getting some weather training in Edmonton for a while and spent about two and a quarter years in the Arctic and saved quite a lot of money. I was a real saver. I saved $11,000, which in those days was quite a lot of money. So I had enough money to loan my brother a down payment on a house and still travel around the world very cheaply (Individual Conversation, May 10, 2001).

Larry recounted to me many of the incidents and moments that are still very clear in his memory in which he lived a story of helping others. One such story is the sharing of fresh fruit.

> We had very little fresh fruit and we got some oranges at Christmas time and I gave an orange to this Eskimo boy. I thought I had really done something nice for him and he took one taste of it and went … 'spu'… and spit it out (laughter). And then he stole my skates. It was funny because they were far too big for him. I wouldn't have minded if he had taken care of them but he left them outside and the dog chewed them up. It was funny (Individual Conversation, May 10, 2001).

Another instance of helping others is when Larry changed his travel plans to be of assistance to a young woman who had been injured.

> The six of us hitch-hiked together and stayed in hostels as we went. When we got to Morocco, one of the girls from South Africa and I got a ride to Tangiers and the others got a ride with a fellow who was in the Military in Morocco and he was busily showing them the sights as they were driving along and he drove off the road. The girl from New Zealand was quite badly injured. So I was three months in Morocco sort of taking care of her in the hospital. I got to know more about the culture and the people there. … When she was well enough, I moved her from where the accident took place – the hospital there, to an English nurse in Tangiers. So she stayed with her. And they eventually got back to New Zealand through London. So I went to see her in New Zealand and I worked in that area for about six months to recoup some of my losses (Individual Conversation, June 21, 2001).

Adjusting his travel plans in order to stay behind to be of help to someone he did not know well was not a big decision for him to make. It seems that he did not experience any inner turmoil between fulfilling his own plans and changing them to help someone else. Helping others is Larry's way of being in the world, so much so, that when opportunities arise for him to help, actually doing it is not questioned. 'Helping others' is a 'story to live by.'

> I find it difficult to communicate the sense of urgency that I feel about changing and improving the world and the way we treat one another. When I come across a callous attitude, I find people can be cruel. Not just callous but cruel – either with one another or with animals or whatever. Trying to get through to people that they were wrong to look down on others or treat them badly. This really, really bothered me when I saw that kind of thing going on. I guess how it plays out in the end is that you do your best to communicate that there is a different way to look at the world and it is based on Christian principles and if you can succeed, you do and if you can't, you just have to accept that you are not going to with some people. …
>
> I remember being in Bombay and I went to the American Express [office] to get my mail because I always gave my parents that address so I could pick up mail. I was walking down the street to the American Express [office] and here is

a man lying on the street scantily clothed. I still remember his feet. His feet were sort of splayed out from walking barefoot for so long and he had deep cracks in his skin. I thought he was dead or definitely dying. What do you do? Here in the street about thirty feet away is a cop directing traffic and so when the traffic got slack I went over and said, 'there is a man over there who needs some help.' He just shrugged his shoulders. Sometimes I felt like, 'I have to get out of here. I can't handle this.' It was just overwhelming (Individual Conversation, June 21, 2001).

The pain Larry felt in this situation came from who he is – someone who always wants to help others.

When I was in Cairo I remember an incident in which an older American fellow came and stayed at the hostel one evening. In the morning, we got up early to do some photography along the Nile. As we were walking along this sandy roadway near the beach, there were some dhows tied up there. We came to this square where there were houses around and here is a man lying on a pile of rock – just a pile of rock, could have been paving stones or something. He was in dire straits, really again, I thought he was dying. Crowded around him was a group of people and children laughing. I got furious, angry that they would laugh at this poor man. The American traveller had a similar feeling and he said something. They couldn't speak any English so all they could register was his fury and they got really furious with him.

This policeman comes along and wants to know what is going on. I tried to say to him that here is a man who is in dire straits and needs some help. He was not really concerned about the man at all. He was concerned about the conflict. I actually felt like we were lucky to get out of there without some physical assault. He was not friendly towards us at all. I think he was wondering whether he should be arresting this American fellow. … The rubber hits the road when you see someone who looks like they are dying, other people making fun of him, and nobody is helping him. …

It seems to me that there are, and this is something that I struggled with a lot when I was travelling, is that there are basic human norms of decency no matter what the culture is. You don't treat someone like an animal. You treat them decently. All those things – life, liberty and freedom. When that is not there, it is hard to respect them (Individual Conversation, June 21, 2001).

The desire to help others is one of the reasons that Larry is involved in a faith community.

One the most helpful things I heard in my earlier years was someone said, 'churches are not hotels for the saints but hospitals for the wounded.' I thought, 'yeah, that fits.' If you can keep that perspective that we are works in progress, we are not finished and we all have our problems, then you don't have such high standards that you apply to other people. You are not so judgmental. (Individual Conversation, May 10, 2001).

It is as though Larry is desirous of helping and is able to help others because he has a perspective on himself that realizes he too is in need of assistance and care from others. This also is part of his 'story to live by.'

Wendy's 'Stories to Live By'

Preface: 'Knowing Wendy'

The first time I met Wendy was at her wedding shower in Regina over twenty years ago. I knew of her through mutual friends and because my mom and her mom had mutual friends. She and I were both attending the University of Regina but she was in Education and I was in Arts. We had not gone to the same high school, nor to the same church.

That one event was it. We did not see each other again for four or five years because I left that city after I completed my Arts degree. By the time I moved back to Regina to begin to teach, Wendy was a very well respected teacher in the Regina district. I knew that she was a hard worker. I would stop by their house – her and her husband Daniel's, on my walk home after my teaching day. She was usually still at school and I was on my second cup of hot chocolate or tea before she would arrive.

I. 'Loving Literature'

Wendy and Daniel were and continue to be a magnet for all kinds of people from various backgrounds who love to read. Literature groups, and the accompanying excellent brunch or appetizer menus, have been as much a part of their homes as the kitchen table. Friends come from their church community, from the refugee and sponsorship groups, from Daniel's colleagues at the university and from Wendy's school connections. The year before I was married and moved away, I relished those evenings and Saturday mornings.

Five years had passed before Wendy and I would again be able to live in the same city. Gary and I were in Edmonton by that time and we delighted in the news that Wendy and Daniel were moving to Edmonton as well. They were both going to be at the University of Alberta, Daniel doing doctoral studies in Post-Colonial Literature and Wendy doing graduate diplomas in Children's Literature and in Teacher Librarianship. They moved into the international kaleidoscope of student housing, started attending the faith community that Gary and I were part of, and again became involved in literary communities.

One of Wendy's 'stories to live by' is of knowing who she is through her love of literature. Although she had "always liked books," it was a children's literature class in her undergraduate work that Wendy marks as fostering this love in her.

> You can skip other classes but that one I never skipped. I absolutely loved it. And now that I am in that field, I have found out who the person is that taught me. She is well known throughout Canada and the States for her contribution to children's literature and libraries. And of course, at the time, I had no idea who 'she' was – Alex Hambelton. I thought that that was a real gift. It was a required class and I took it but I loved it (Individual Conversation, June 11, 2001).

This love of literature filtered into her classrooms right from the very beginning of her teaching life.

> Lots of people around me didn't incorporate or integrate literature into social studies and science but I always did. And even when I taught grade one, I used to read chapter books aloud, not just picture books. I always loved teaching reading and language arts (Individual Conversation, June 11, 2001). Literacy and literature are the two things that matter the most to me about teaching (Individual Conversation, June 30, 2001).

Literacy and literature define who she is as a teacher. And 'loving literature' defines who Wendy is in her world. I cannot count the number of times, when Wendy and I have been together in some situation, that Wendy has told me that the particular experience we were encountering at the time, reminded her of this book by so and so or that story illustrated by this artist. One of the ways she engages her world and one of the ways she knows who she is in her world is through her love of literature.

II. 'Creating Professional Networks'

Another way that Wendy knows who she is in her world is through professional relationships. Her and Daniel's move from Regina to Edmonton was in part Wendy's desire to live out a new 'story to live by' through studies at the University of Alberta with key professors in the children's literature area. It is a 'story to live by' that was called out of her because of her time in Edmonton. Her studies and her teaching assignments fostered an incredibly rich network of people with this common interest.

> There were a lot of things to belong to. In my field, there was the International Reading Association and the Children's Literature Round Table and the Learning Council and a lot of the people I met, particularly in the last class that I took, were people with whom we started this 'Teachers as Readers' group. We met once a month and talked about children's books. I met a lot of people.
>
> It was exciting to meet people of my profession inside of the church context as well. And that was a new thing for me. I hadn't really gone to church with teachers who were interested and active professionals so there was a lot of overlap between faith and being an active professional and all the learning and growing that was happening in those years. It was a wonderful thing. …
>
> It was a sense of learning and blossoming and finding out that I did have a respectable brain and that I could think. I was finally in a situation where I met people that fostered that and I think we played off of each other. I encouraged

> people and people encouraged me. I hadn't really had that before. I felt in Regina that teaching was often – if you came up with an interesting idea, you closed your door cause, gosh, you had worked hard to come up with that. There wasn't a lot of sharing and collegiality, which was a very different experience for me in Edmonton. It was wonderful and it didn't always have to be within your school context because there were so many other places that you could get it. Whether that was through the people that I had met at the university or through the different associations. Because there was so much professional development, there was a lot of networking. I have been here (Ontario) for four years and I hardly know anyone outside of my given school situation. Whereas in Edmonton, I knew so many people who made it a really rich time (Individual Conversation, June 11, 2001).

Wendy's identity as a teacher and as a person is expressed in the professional relationships she has. If she does not have these relationships, she will work to create them for it is in these relationships that Wendy knows who she is. Even the name of one of the networks she helped create, 'Teachers as Readers', is about an identity she has come to hold and cherish.

Wendy's desire to go to Kenya was an expression of this 'story to live by' – it was another opportunity to create professional relationships.

> I don't know what I have to share because the context is so different in Kenya, but because [professional development] has been so important in my own life, it is one of the reasons I want to go. I just know how important having dialogue with other teachers has been in my life. I just want to help facilitate that in whatever way that I can. You can't change what you are doing if you aren't exposed to anything else. Maybe some people are gifted enough to be able to read a book and say, 'this is all I need. I can change.' I need more than a book. A good book can spark ideas but I still need somebody to talk those ideas out with and see how it would work and how this could be applied. I need people to be able to do that with. I have read some fabulous books and they have given me some really good ideas but people have been the most important way that I have grown as a professional. Again, I think this is why this is a marvelous opportunity for these teachers in Kenya. We can provide them with the forum for professional development. … I learn so much in dialogue with others that, in being able to talk about the course itself – be it the strategies or the background experience that you bring to your teaching, all of those kinds of things, if you aren't able to talk with other people about your ideas, you don't know the richness of what you know and you don't get the richness of what other people have to bring (Individual Conversation, June 11, 2001).

'Creating professional relationships' is so much a part of how Wendy lives, that she wants to be part of an opportunity that will create this for others with others. The fact that she will be able to create professional relationships with Kenyan teachers is extremely attractive to her.

III. 'Always Learning'

As well as Wendy's time at the University of Alberta, Wendy's teaching years in Edmonton's public schools were also significant learning years for her. While there, she had assignments in six schools in five years. After having only four assignments in seven years in Regina, Wendy reflects that, for a person who does not like change, she would not want to change her experiences.

> Being in different schools and working with different principals and different staff people, you just learn to be a bit more flexible and to roll with the punches. It was during those times that I worked a lot with the teacher librarian in my school and learned a lot about the value of being a team player and planning together. There are many neat things that you can come up with when there are two of you planning for a learning environment and learning situations for kids. ... Edmonton was the time when I felt that I really wanted to learn as a teacher and be a reflective practitioner so I could learn about what I was doing and I could change what I was doing based on what I was learning. That was the first time for me that I was really proud to be a teacher. I felt like I was doing the very best that I could because I was always learning. I could expect that my kids should always be learning because I was too (laughter) (Individual Conversation, June 11, 2001).

The 'story to live by' of 'always learning' for Wendy is so much of who she is that she associates learning with being a good teacher. When Wendy encounters a time in her life when she is not learning, I suspect that she will question her identity as a good teacher.

Given the learning and community environment she was in, Wendy's move to Ontario was a very difficult one. Even so, she did not stop enacting what she had come to know as critical in her teaching life, as her 'story to live by.' When the possibility of a Learning Opportunities Grant was offered to her school, she relied on her past experience to make it work – the experience of coming to associate being a good teacher with 'always learning.'

> What started me thinking about the way I would try and put the proposal together was that our money was only guaranteed for one year. I know a lot of people were asking for perhaps a reading recovery teacher to come in but, in that model, I know that you can only work with say ten to twelve children. Whereas, when I looked at the makeup of our classrooms, at least one third of the students are at-risk in each one of our classrooms in my school. So I started to think, 'what can you hope to accomplish in one year if you brought in a specialist?' There had to be another way of being able to try to touch the lives of the one third of these classrooms.
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> So then I began to think about, 'well, what if we,' again I went back to my rich years in Edmonton where professional development was something that really changed me, 'what if we used that model?' If we can grow as professionals, then

that will impact our classes. Yes, it will be a slower process but it is going to have a broader effect.

Indeed, that is what has happened. Because of this year, we have really changed the model that we will be using for the way we teach reading and the way we formulate our classes. And in fact, we've opened an extra Grade One classroom even though the board hasn't given us the money with which to do it. We've cut back in other areas instead. ...

It has been curious because we had the opportunity to submit the grant again, [even though] there was not going to be as much money. The person who is looking at the proposals phoned me cause he had heard about our model from before. He said, 'is this all going to fall apart since I can't give you what you had before?' So I certainly tried to say that it can't fall apart because the teachers have changed. You can't go back to where you were (Individual Conversation, June 11, 2001).

The way in which Wendy approached, pursued and implemented the Learning Opportunities Grant in her school is, to me, an expression of her 'story to live by' as teacher as learner. Her identity as a teacher and as a person is entwined in and expressed by the intentional learning she pursues.

IV. 'Celebrating Friendships'

Wendy told me about many of the people in her and Daniel's lives over the years, many I have come to know because of my friendship with them. To her, they are not just memories. The people about whom she speaks are more like living presences for she is mindful of them and their contribution to the enlargement of her experience of life day by day (Individual Conversation, June 30, 2001). Wendy and Daniel have and enact an incredible ability and intentional commitment to stay connected with so many of these relationships. Being their friend means living in the knowledge of the security of the long term. One of her 'stories to live by' is knowing herself as someone who celebrates friendships and as someone who is friend.

Brent is one such person in her life. Because she has lived her 'story to live by' of being friend with him, she is able to celebrate a person rather than debate an issue. Brent is a person she has come to greatly value and with whom she knows herself as friend.

Knowing a person and having a face, it (homosexuality) is not an issue anymore. (Carla: "This is my friend we are talking about.") Exactly. ... He has such a complex background and he has lived it with such a seeming lack of scarring. Although I knew that he was constantly having to deal with issues, he wasn't all hung up on them. He is such a warm, inviting, wonderful person that he just invited you in rather than pushed you away. He made me feel very accepted and I want to discover what it is like to be in his skin and explore that with him rather than thinking that this is something that is just an issue that I have to take sides on (Individual Conversation, June 30, 2001).

There are so many other people in Wendy's life who allow her to know herself as a celebrator of friendships. It is in her relationships with them that she comes to know herself and her world.

> Larby and Romita, Linda and Jane were all in Daniel's classes at the University of Alberta. We were thinking about how interesting it was that [they are from all over.] Larby is from Ghana. Romita is from Bengal. Linda came over from England when she was about six. She has German ancestry but comes from England. And Jane is Canadian. ... They certainly are interesting folks. Now Romita is in Guelph and we get to see her occasionally. And Linda is in Waterloo and Jane comes out occasionally from Vancouver as well. They are the ones that we had a sort of reunion with last October. They all came here because they had organized a conference together five years ago. It was a reunion of the Po-Co (post-colonial) people. It was wonderful (Individual Conversation, June 30, 2001).
>
> [W]ithin our first while [at our church in Edmonton], we met Gwen and Cam and Anne and a few others. We got together because we wanted to do something about sponsorship for refugees. Gwen had all the contacts and did most of the leg work but we met some wonderful people. The ones that stand out for me most that we did sponsor were Adnan and Radna. We get in touch with them on their anniversary of coming to Canada. They always contact us. We had an enjoyment of mutual things. We both enjoyed foreign films so we would get together and watch films. I remember the first time they came to our apartment and them laughing at our old, old television. We inherited this ancient television from my parents. It must have been 25 years old when we first got it. They were laughing because they loved videos and they would have had the latest television themselves. They came as refugees with what they could carry in suitcases and they were laughing at what we didn't have (Individual Conversation, June 30, 2001).
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> We also started a friendship with George and Grace and their family. Talk about the obstacles that people over come. This is a kid who had polio and was basically abandoned as useless from his own family. He had some relatives who thought that he might get the chance to go to school but he was the lowest of the low in that household. And sometimes they didn't give him enough to eat. But in the refugee camp, he was the person who set up the school and did lots of other things for his community. He was just totally accepting of his situation. He didn't kick at it or resent it. Sometimes we thought that he was a little too laid back and accepting of things. Maybe he didn't have enough impetuous to do better with what he was given. He was just very content with his lot, which is so different from us. We are so impatient and kick at what we have been handed but he was very accepting of the whole situation (Individual Conversation, June 30, 2001).

Negussie is a man that continues to live in Wendy's 'story to live by' even though he died in 1993. He had been Daniel's childhood friend in Ethiopia and was one of the main reasons that Wendy and Daniel made Wendy's first trip to Africa. He was quite ill

when they arrived. It was a sickness he contracted while attending a seminary in Kenya. He died just after they had had one visit together. Negussie's wife and two sons are left to navigate Ethiopian life without him. In recognition of who he was and is in their lives, Daniel and Wendy established a scholarship in their current community for a graduating high school student of Afro-Canadian descent.

> These kids (who win the scholarship) may be disadvantaged because of economics but they are kids who are head and shoulders above their classmates. They have all excelled. They have a million things on their plate. They are not just good students. They are good athletes and involved in their community and all kinds of really wonderful things. They have a banquet where they are introduced and given their scholarships. There is a long CV of all of their credentials and they are just kids but their lives have been so remarkable so far (Individual Conversation, June 30, 2001).

Wendy is someone who is herself when she is in relationships. She does not just make room for others, but she makes a space for others which she herself enters into.

> I think that people are always important. People are the markers that I would go back to in terms of opening up my worldview and enlarging my worldview. I think that has influenced and changed who I am in the classroom.
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> I guess I think back to the first time that I really knew a person who was not Protestant and was Catholic and was 'the other' and that was getting to know Erica. That was a wonderful opening to accept other people. Meeting people from other cultures is another thing or having a really good friendship with a gay person is another opening and a broadening experience. All of these different kinds of meetings of people accept and enlarge who I am because I have made space for somebody else who is so totally other than who I am.
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> Again, I think that helps me be more accommodating in the classroom because, whether it is somebody with a totally different economic background or some other kind of difference, these are all people that you have to get your head around. Because they aren't you, you have to try to understand where they are coming from and that has helped me enormously in my teaching experience to be able to embrace them.
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> There are other times when you have met people from other cultures and you think, 'well, there are good things about that culture but there are things that I don't like and don't think that we need in our culture.' It is hard to be tolerant of that because there is positive and negative to culture around me. All of those kinds of things have come from people who have been markers in my life that I have had to try to accommodate and open my periphery and try to accept (Individual Conversation, June 11, 2001). ...
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> I wonder if some of it is just not to pre-judge: To be able to be open and receptive. It is people that matter more than the difference. Whether that is us or whether that is intellectual ability or whatever it is, people are more than those differences (Individual Conversation, June 30, 2001).

In all of these relationships that Wendy has told me about, and, having lived alongside Wendy in relationship for many years, I have to come to see friendships as an expression of who Wendy is. Her 'story to live by' of 'celebrating friendships' is a story wherein friend is the character she lives. She does not just make room for others in her life. She enters into her world by making a new space initiated by the others' presence, a space into which she herself enters and knows herself as friend.

Carla's 'Stories to Live By':

Writing some of the 'stories to live by' of other people was difficult enough. Writing my own 'stories to live by' was overwhelming. For me, the greatest difficulty is in what Crites calls 'the aesthetics of self-deception' (1979), the overwhelming awareness that the decision to write about some aspect of my identity censors out some other aspect. When I wrote the 'stories to live by' of Ken, Dana, Larry and Wendy, I was not privy to their initial censorship decisions. In the writing of my own, I am in constant negotiation with aspects of myself that I both want and do not want to make public – assuming that I know these aspects of myself in the first place, as well as with the choices I make in how they are presented. When I am writing from the midst of this tension, I choose to print the words in Italic script to remind both the reader and myself that, at any moment, I could have chosen very easily to write something else.

What follows are four 'stories to live by' that I have come to know again because of my involvement in this research project. They are stories that I have known and told in varying ways over the years but re-tell them here in a way that has been fashioned out of my thinking about the experience that was to follow. As is the case of articulating the identities of my four colleagues by writing the 'stories to live by' that I came to know of them, my stories as well contain memories and reflections of moments that resurfaced or surfaced for the first time because of thinking about the experience in the borderlands generated by the teacher professional development in the cross-cultural setting of Kenya. The voice I use to tell my stories is quite different from the voice I used in the writing of the others' stories. The voice I use in my stories is a prosaically intimate one. Rather than attempting to objectify myself and not succeeding, I believe that the voice I use is a truer expression of how I am coming to tell myself, and others, my 'stories to live by.'

I. 'Grounded in People, Place and Past'

I come from the prairies. There, I learned to ride a bike, to swim, to skate and to play ball. I caught my first fish. I passed my piano exams. I chased gophers. I delivered papers. I memorized the colours of the sunsets. I earned my first degree. I preached my first sermon. I watched the beginning, sat through the middle and said good-bye to summer storms. I was surrounded by seasons. I loved and was loved. I made life commitments. I became anchored. I learned to see. I would stand on the crest of a hill and be able to see the horizon in every direction. I would feel the prairie wind nudge me and I found myself leaning into life as it invited my involvement. It was then I came to

believe that the world was not meant to have borders. It was then I decided to become a teacher.

My mother's father's family was from Ireland. John Sackville was a brick-maker. Out of desperation to work, he ventured across borders of ocean and country and culture to Canada, to Ontario. He'd heard they could use a man like him there. I think that meant his talent but it could have also meant his work ethic and maybe even his capacity to hold his liquor. His son and my grandfather, Elmer, journeyed to Saskatchewan from there, to a real place called Fairyland. My mother has a family tree that one of her cousins put together. It says that she is a descendant, through her mother's side, of Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII's second wife. I sometimes wonder what they all have in common. I am from places far away and I teach knowing that we all have roots that run deep.

Saskatchewan gave my grandfather place and a family of four sons. In the flu epidemic of 1919, my grandfather lost his wife and three of his sons. The pain drove him on and after a tragic accident that killed his last son, my grandfather found himself in foreign territory again – all alone. I can only imagine what his second marriage to my grandmother, Edythe Mullett, must have meant – what it meant to either of them. She had been engaged to my grandfather's younger brother but he didn't return from the war. When the house became too small for this next family, they moved from the farm at Fairyland and bought a house in the nearby town. My grandfather kept working the farm leaving my grandmother alone with the children much of the time. My grandfather died before I was born and I never got the sense that anyone had really known him at his best. I am from places long forgotten and I teach hoping to instill a wonder about what was.

I do remember my grandmother. Her thick red hair had white threads by the time I knew her and I could fit all of me, and the cat, onto her lap even when I was three. I don't remember her voice. Maybe she didn't have one left by that time. I can still hear my mother's sighs around the time of grandma's death. Maybe they were of relief that the physical pain my grandmother suffered had finally ended. Maybe they were echoes of a lost voice. Maybe they were Mom's attempts to give that voice one last chance to speak. I am from silenced places and I teach hoping I can hear every student.

My mother, Bertha, is the middle child, that is, if you don't count the two children who died in infancy. She has a sister ten years older and a sister ten years younger and two brothers, one on either side at five year intervals. I think this is why some of my perception of her is as a fulcrum – the balancing point in the middle. Her delight seemed to be in anything that was out and eventful. She loved school and basketball and softball and wearing lipstick. She loved to join her father with the chores – loading the hay or cleaning the barn, just to be with him, to hear his poetry, to let their spirits laugh together. She became a nurse, a psychiatric one at that. My favourite picture of her is of her and her friends trying to figure out how to get those little white hats to stay on their heads. She worked. She helped support her mother and younger siblings. Her biggest treasure was her little sister. I am from places of belonging and I teach with an invitation to safe places.

My Dad's parents grew up in Ukraine, the south part with rich farm land. John Epp and Elizabeth Peters, sweethearts after the war. Marriage came from love, not obligation. They worked the land. They tried to forget a revolution that pitted my grandfather against his brothers. They desired to live the adventure and opportunity and service that was possible in Catherine the Great's invitation to their ancestral community to farm the land of Russia. My grandparents were to be teachers and agricultural leaders. They crossed borders and were disillusioned. They were used and mistreated. They were part of a war they did not want. They were able to leave before the borders closed for good so they rode in a carriage. They walked. They waited. They rode in a train like cattle. They huddled on a boat. They travelled until they could take no more and stopped in northern Saskatchewan. I am from persistence and hope and I teach desiring to companion my students on their journey.

A homestead slowly emerged out of rock and tree north of Battleford – at a place called Fairholme, not far from Fairyland. The cold they said was like no other. It ate you. The heat made you starve and the work ... the work was. My grandfather smiled and shook when he laughed and made me feel like the luckiest girl on earth when he held my hand. My grandmother didn't ever seem to stop talking. She seemed to always be complaining – at least the English she spoke was always complaining. Maybe German was the language for celebration. Together they survived and adopted two children. I am from commitment and I teach longing for my students to work, to live, and to be proud.

My father's birth family was Hannah. I therefore have grandparents I know nothing about. Maybe they grew up in Holland and made cheese and rode bicycles. Maybe they escaped terror during the war. Maybe they escaped the terror they caused others. Maybe Canada was hope. I am from pain and I teach hoping that my students will find joy.

My Dad, Kenneth Dale by birth but Arnold John by life, had dreams of engineering and business and enlisting and travelling. But he was needed to work the farm. He chose not to leave. His younger sister had left home and Dad took his responsibilities deeply. His back is really quite hunched now, maybe a present picture of all those times of picking rocks, and forking hay, and feeding animals, and building fences, and hauling water, and.... He lived for his parents. He doesn't regret it. I am from dreams and I teach desiring to hear and be part of and encourage and even live the visions my students have for themselves.

My parents met at a mental hospital – that's what they called it then. Mom was nursing and Dad worked as an orderly after his parents sold the farm. I remember finding the love cards my Dad had written my Mom. They were in the old trunk in the garage next to the broken toilet and the garbage cans. I don't remember either of them saying those words even though I knew they were understood. One card in particular I remember. Its picture was not of hearts and roses. It was not of far off romantic beach sunsets. It was of a clump of Brown-Eyed Susans in a prairie field at sunset. I am from the prairies and I am a teacher.

II. 'Coming to See'

Little kids often have dreams. I did. I remember so many of the adventures I had. Fishing trips where I caught the biggest one. Playing cowboys and Indians in the back yard with my brother and his friends. I used a bow and arrow – and this was before I had a brother and sister of aboriginal descent. I would be at a baseball game or at the skating rink or in the school yard or in our kitchen having a marvelous time with friends and family – laughing, playing full out, daring to do the ultimate.

And then, all of a sudden, the fun would stop — for me. It did not stop for anyone else. They did not know anything had changed. They all kept on with the fun and the laughter and the challenge. But another little girl had just entered the scene – the baseball game or the skating rink or the school yard or the kitchen. This little girl looked just like me. In fact, all the others thought that she was me. Nothing had changed, you see. Carla was still in the fun and the laughter and the challenge.

But she was not Carla. She was an imposter – or at least, back then, I thought she was an imposter. She would come in and take my place and I would be pushed to the side watching her do the things that I wanted to do and watch her enjoy and be enjoyed by the people I enjoyed and watch her live the life that I wanted to live. "Can't you see? Don't you know? That little girl is not me. I am over here. Look, see my eyes. I am the one with eyes wide open. She, that girl, she doesn't have any eyes. Brush away the hair that falls over her forehead and you will see. There are no eyes there. That girl can not see."

That little girl is no longer the imposter. She is the part of me that, at any time, can choose to enter into life with eyes closed and can miss the possibilities that exist for her and for others through her. She is the part of me who has a decision to make – will she, will I, choose to enter in or not.

Well, I made that decision – a long time ago now. It was a directional choice, a conversion of sorts. I decided with my mind and my heart that I want to teach, I want to live, I want to be the one with 'eyes wide open', eyes ready to meet the people, eyes ready to learn, eyes ready to join the fun and the laughter and the challenge, eyes ready to come to know – eyes ready to see.

III. 'Knowing the Borderlands of My World'

I know that when my sister was little, my mother told her that her skin was the colour of rich caramel because God had left her in the oven for just the right amount of time. Unfortunately, He had taken Mom and me out just a little too soon. When my younger sister and brother came to join our family, I was nine years old and my biological brother, John, was eleven. Wanda was three and Steven was five. They are siblings by birth as well as adoption. The social workers did not want to split up these two youngest children of a family of eleven. I'm sure they did not want to split any of them up but there probably seemed no other way at the time. The foster homes had taken

their toll and Mom and Dad had much to do and to offer to make up for lost time, for lost love, for lost lives. Wanda was a charmer and so talented. Her fingers are a full knuckle length longer than mine and I could never make my arpeggios sing like she could. I know that my world has many dimensions. I am one who hopes to explore them all.

I know that the family who lived down the street were Chinese and owned a restaurant. Every time they came to pick the perfect peonies off our front bushes, we ate foods that tasted foreign and inviting and exotic. The younger son of that family and I were friends. What a pair we must have made. He, short and chunky, and I, tall and skinny. I loved the smell of his house. I know that my world makes me curious. I am one who lives the intrigue.

I know that two of my high school friends grew up in Bolivia. Their stories made me wild with wonder. Their Spanish spoke of a passion for life I had not tasted. Their love for bright colours revealed a vision I had not seen. And the rhythm in their music offered a dance I had not yet learned. I know that my world exposes me to new possibilities. I am one who wants to give them a try.

I know that when I dated Kim, his father was suspect of my white skin. I do not remember my father saying anything about his Asian-ness. I do not remember my father saying anything about him at all. I know that different aspects of my world seem to and seem not to be seen by some people. I am one who wants to see.

I know that when I married Gary, it was my Vietnamese students who came to the celebration the earliest and stayed the latest. Eight of them arrived at my door on my wedding day. Their first glimpse of the bride was me in my bathrobe, my hair in a towel. They did not seem to mind. They came in and smiled and waited. They came with me and my attendants and my father and my stepdaughter-to-be to the church. And they were happy to stay with me as long as they could. I know that my world shows me new ways to enter in. I am one who chooses to do so.

I know that the students who speak more than one language can describe our world in richer ways. One particular young man was in my grade ten class and one day I asked him what he was writing in the back of his notebook. He showed me. He had pages of charts of words – words in seven languages. When I looked at him with wonder, he told me that he liked to have options. I know that my world's tapestry is made with many threads. I am one who has begun to weave my own.

I know that some students do not come to school on certain days of the year when they are supposed to because of special religious celebrations. I also know that some students do not come to school on certain days of the year when they are not supposed to but they do not know what they are to be celebrating. I know that my world does not always make sense. I am one who is trying to figure it out.

I know that when she called me Miss Carla, my heart would sing. In Chile, where she had grown up, they addressed their teachers with this very special blend of respect

and intimacy. I addressed her in the same way hoping that she would know that she was my teacher. I know that my world can make me blush. I am one who blushes easily.

I know that nodding one's head up and down and turning one's head from left to right and back again can mean different things in different cultures. I learned this the hard way of course. I was trying to explain the meaning of a word to one of my students from Sri Lanka. After my effort, she turned her head from left to right and back again. So I explained the word again. Again she turned her head from left to right and back again. Persistent as I am, I kept explaining until she finally told me, as she was turning her head from left to right and back again, that I did not have to explain it again. She had understood the first time. I know that my world invites my attention. I am one who wishes to respond.

I know the joy, the absolute giddy delight, of witnessing students learn something that they never thought they would ever have a chance, an opportunity, even an inclination to learn. Most of the students of that class had been in Canada for less than six months. It was winter in Saskatchewan and part of my job as teacher was to melt their frozen souls. I persuaded the used skate shop to allow me to borrow enough skates so that we could all give it a try on Regina's frozen lake. Such amazement, such wonder, such sheer delight – to be laughing and playing and gliding on water. I know that my world helps me see my privilege. I am one who is learning to use it wisely.

I know that my study of New Testament Greek in seminary helped me make sense of the notes the parents wrote to the school in the only language they knew. And I know that when I speak French, the way people listen changes. And I know that the visiting professor chuckled when he heard that I was studying Hebrew because he believes that when we get to Heaven, God will be speaking Korean. I know that my world is full of surprises. I am one who longs to recognize them when they come.

I know that I am embarrassed to tell the truth about the fact that I do not have a biological child of my own to my Kenyan colleagues. They associate wealth with the number of children in the family and prestige with the number of times a woman has endured labour and wisdom with the lessons learned from raising children and success with the opportunities their children are given. They look questioningly at me wondering how a white woman can be so poor. I know that my world reveals my poverty. I am one who is willing to admit it.

I know that when my principal called me a racist, I wanted to go blind. I wanted to stop seeing the uniqueness various students exhibited. I wanted to close my eyes to the differences in expression and choices and responses. I wanted to pretend that they faded into whiteness. And then, I wanted to show him that he was wrong. I know that my world is often misunderstood. I am one who hopes to bring some clarity.

IV. 'Leaning into Life'

There we sat, the twenty-five of us or so, in all-too-familiar desks in all-too-familiar rows in all-too-familiar concrete walls. It was the very first class of the first day of my education degree. I did not know the man at the front. He told us his name and that we was our professor for that term and then he posed the question – "So, why do you want to be a teacher?"

I do not remember the responses of my classmates. Maybe my memory isn't great but, more likely, it is probably because I was overwhelmed with fear: fear of not making sense, fear of offering something precious to people who may not care, fear of being judged, fear of just maybe not knowing why I wanted to be a teacher.

Once all of us had responded in some way to his question, he looked at us quite matter-of-factly and said, "You are all liars. You want to be teachers because of the great summer holidays." He closed his briefcase and left. I wish I could remember how he started class number two.

There is a grain of truth to what he said, maybe more than a grain, but staying alive and fresh in this profession requires much more than the anticipation of time off. 'So why do I teach?' I have thought a lot about this over the years of teaching, in the studies I have done, through the conversations with people in my life and because of the need I feel to have a reason that is bigger than myself for doing what I do. My professor's question that day taught me about the importance of continual reflection in my teaching life. The story I have come to live out of is not about place – 'I want to be in a school.' It is not about role – 'I want to be a teacher or a counsellor or something else.' It is about direction – 'I want to work towards, I want to lean towards, I want to live towards ... possibility, hope, justice, reconciliation, and grace. This is why I teach. This is what gives my life meaning. It is about identity. It is about who I hope to be.

<u>On our Way to Kenya</u>

The 'stories to live by' of five unique individuals came together in the decision to share the experience of going to Kenya to participate in a professional development program. Five talented, thoughtful, faithful, and adventurous teachers, each with their own 'stories to live by,' were going to Kenya to meet and to work with and to learn alongside 38 equally talented, thoughtful, faithful, fun-loving, adventurous and story-telling teachers. We each had our own reasons for going. The excerpts which follow express these reasons and moves the research text from our 'stories to live by' into the next chapter, the 'stories from the borderlands.'

Ken:

Ken and I have been to Kenya together twice. When I asked him why he went

and why he would go again, he answered, because "I was invited and I was invited back" (Individual Conversation, May 8, 2001). Ken expressed very clearly right from the possibility of going to Kenya that he is not going because he is an expert of some kind.

> Last night, after the meeting, I got home and thought, 'what am I doing! I do not know anything about these people.' ... I thought, 'you know, we're both teachers, these Kenyans and I are both teachers,' but I had this sense that we teach in this completely different context – language, wealth and everything. 'Is there anything I can bring to you?' It just seemed so preposterous to me last night. ... It just seems silly. I have nothing to give. ... On the other hand, you've seen their faces too. People are so grateful for the smallest things. This repeated theme, stuff you and I take for granted, things we know about how to teach and so on. No one ever taught them and they suspect those ways of doing things exist and they just need someone to tell them, show them. ... It's because no one says, 'this sucks!' (laughter). They are grateful for everything. That's why I go there. It restores me so I can teach in Canada for another year where there are people who put their feet up on the table and say, 'this sucks.' [In Kenya,] the superintendent said to me, 'you're a born teacher.' I thought, 'you know, that will go on my resumé.' An African said I was a born teacher, which means he doesn't see me as a colonial master but as a colleague across this cultural, linguistic, racial boundary too. Or Paul last year said too, 'You're the first person I've met who can tell jokes and they got them.' I thought, 'it is not because I studied their culture.' It was just me (Individual Conversation, May 8, 2001).

Ken is going to Kenya because it is a place where he can live his 'stories to live by' freely and fully.

Dana:

Dana was game right from the beginning of the project– before the beginning actually. She had watched as other groups of volunteers had gone to Kenya from our church community but life circumstances were such that it did not make such involvement possible for her.

> I looked with envy every time a group [from our church community] would go [to Kenya] and I couldn't because I had to teach. There weren't many of us who were educators who could go [because most of the prior trips had been during the school year]. Because of one of the things we got to do when I was in Ethiopia was to work with a group of teachers, just a small number of teachers, I have always wanted to do it again. I don't remember quite how that got set up but there was Joanne and a colleague of hers named Mary who was Australian and then me. And I remember disagreeing with a lot of things they wanted to do with these teachers. But I was still in school and I thought, 'okay, just let them do what they know.' So I've always wanted to go back and have that experience of working with teachers. I thought I would go two years ago when you first went. In hindsight, I am glad that I didn't. Caleb (her son who was two and half years

> old at the time of this conversation) could have come along but he was too young. It is always something that I have wanted to do and so when you invited me to consider it, Grant and I sat down and his first response was, 'you need to do it' (Individual Conversation, May 9, 2001).

Larry:

"In a way, I've always been on my way to Kenya, at least for many years – forty or more" (E-mail, January 7, 2002). Although there were other factors involved in Larry's decision to participate, finally going to Kenya for this experience of professional development seemed a matter of congruence – matching the number of countries with his age and learning alongside Kenyan teachers on the wake of his retirement.

Larry knew he wanted to participate in the Kenya project from the first he had heard about it. He had been at a gathering of many church communities in central Alberta at which my husband Gary was speaking. Gary had not mentioned anything about the possibility of Alberta teachers going to Kenya. But, after his presentation, Larry approached Gary and talked to him of his desire to return overseas now that his teaching career was coming to a close. Larry says that Gary's response was, "oh, Carla is aiming to go to Kenya. You should talk to her" (Individual Conversation, May 10, 2001). And Larry tells me, "I just knew that I had to do this. And Lou (Larry's wife) immediately realized that that was the right thing for me to do to. I need to do it" (Individual Conversation, June 21, 2001).

Wendy:

Wendy had been to Kenya once before this trip. She and Daniel had taken a trip to Africa in 1993 to revisit and reconnect with people and stories of Daniel's growing up days in Ethiopia and Kenya. That trip and the international communities in Regina and Edmonton had whetted her curiosity.

> I am curious to find out what it is like to be in a different context because sometimes difference is a really welcome thing in our life and sometimes it can be a scary thing. When those two things meet, it is a good learning opportunity.
>
> I am curious to know how things are done elsewhere and I am also curious to know what it is like to be a Christian teacher in that environment given my context. I am curious to know how that influences their day and if it changes their interactions with their students at all and what the given framework is like. … [H]aving always taught in the public schools, I am curious to know what it is like to be a Christian teacher in their situation of public education as well. …
>
> I think it will be interesting to see what they do with what they have. I often feel handicapped in my school situation when I don't have at my disposal the resources that I would like to have that I know that exist and would be so enriching to my teaching and my students. I know that teaching there is a rich environment as well but it is different. How do they teach without the kinds of

things that we have? I guess that is one of the things that I would be curious to know about.

What is it that motivates their children to learn and to excel? I find that there is a lack of motivation here. I mean our kids have everything at their disposal and yet asking them to do their best is really a foreign idea. So that is [another] one of the things that I want to know. What is it that makes their students tick and what enables them or empowers them to get the most from what they have? No, they can't run down the hall and use the photocopier or they can't run out to *Chapters* or *Scholar's Choice* and get the latest on curriculum – I can. And I still find that with all of these things we have to offer students, education, at least in my area of the city, is not a huge priority for the students or for the families. I know that that is not the case in Kenya so I am curious to know what is it that enables those kids to make due with what they don't have (Individual Conversation, June 11, 2001).

I am curious and curiosity means that you are willing to expose who you are and take risks as well (Individual Conversation, June 30, 2001). [On this trip to Kenya,] I am going for something that I think is a good thing for us to do and that is what makes it different somehow. I am not going as a tourist although going on safari will be wonderful. … [It] will be different because of the people. It is just not the unknown. By spending two weeks together, there will hopefully be some kind of dialogue and understanding that will happen and will enlarge the box rather than narrow it. Going seems to be a good thing (Individual Conversation, June 30, 2001).

Although Wendy's decision to go to Kenya was based on these thoughtful responses, she also expressed the following.

> Up till today (end of March, 2001), I think I was going to Africa cause I thought it was a 'good' thing for me to do. Yesterday, I'd had enough of being a teacher in Ontario, in my backward-looking school board and in my school with obstructionist people! I was feeling like the last thing I wanted to do with my summer was spend three more weeks being an on-duty teacher. But you know, today, my heart kicked in. I get to spend time this summer with dedicated teachers who truly want to learn and grow professionally – both in Canada and Africa! I get to hang out with some remarkable friends and participate in a neat program all at the same time. I'm really lucky (E-mail, March 27, 2001).

Carla:

As the plane descends into Nairobi, I swear I can see a giraffe beside the runway. What world am I entering? It's a world that seems at once so foreign and yet so familiar. The grasslands wave in a prairie-like wind and from a distance the gazelle fool me into thinking that the plains antelope have come south for the winter. Looking up, the sky is the same blue wrapping that has comforted and covered me for my entire forty plus years as a Western Canadian. But the garbage fires beside the road, the women carrying straw bales six feet long on their backs, the children holding out dirty hands hoping for at least – or at best – the gift of touch, the diesel fumes intoxicating the air and the Maasai

herding their cows in the green ditches confirm that I have crossed into unknown territory.

José Ortega y Gassett (as cited in Norris, 1993) did write, "Tell me the landscape in which you live and I will tell you who you are." But he did not write about what happens to persons when they leave that landscape and cross borders into the unknown.

Will I lose myself completely or will I find connections? Will I have any anchors or will I be like a kite in the wind whose string has broken? Will I be able to trust me or will I not know who I am? What can I possibly offer anyway? Will I make sense? Is my language too enculturated? Will we find enough common ground? How does teaching in luxurious Canada relate to teaching in non-luxurious Kenya? Will we dialogue? Will this expose our indulgent culture? How will I defend it? Will I defend it? Will it expose me? Will I leave intact? Can I risk this? Why shouldn't I risk this? Am I being exploited? Am I exploiting them? Do they know how much I need them? Will they like me? Will being female be a factor? How will they see my whiteness? How do I see my whiteness? How do I see their blackness? How do they see their blackness? What if they disagree with me? Can I handle being wrong? How do I know that what I will teach is truth? Do I know anything as truth? Why me? Why now? Why not me? Why not now?

So why have I come? Yes, because I was invited. But I could have refused. I have come for reasons of adventure and service and learning. I've come because somewhere inside me I know that I won't or maybe even can't change unless I go outside of myself and my known world. So why change? Isn't change just a North American construct of saturated individualism? Maybe change is the experience I need to convince myself that, in my privileged comfort, I am still alive. Or is the desire for change even more basic than this: Is it part of the very fabric with which human nature is made? Is it a direction that must be followed because to be human means to be in the making? I am not a finished product. I continue to be created through both my intentional and unintentional encounters with the people and the world around me. If, then, it is even somewhat true that change is inevitable, I choose to leave the familiar and come to Kenya because the change that happens in me here is also the change that needs to happen in our world.

Chapter Five:
'STORIES FROM THE BORDERLANDS'

'Stories from the borderlands' are stories that serve as "disruption and essential counterpoint" (Steedman, 1986, p. 22). They are told in tension and ambiguity. They are stories that serve to interrupt and dislocate our life's continuity. They are stories that are generated out of experience and have the potential to shift held beliefs, assumed notions, long-standing opinions, or, in the case of this study, all of the above as represented in our 'stories to live by.'

Several visual images come to mind as I try to capture the significance of 'stories from the borderlands.' These stories are like the eye of the needle through which our 'stories to live by' are threaded. They are like the central junction through which our 'stories to live by' must enter in order to shift directions. They are like the crystal through which the light of our 'stories to live by' must pass in order to see their dimensions refracted with new understanding and new awareness. When our 'stories to live by' pass through the 'stories from the borderlands,' they, and therefore we, are given the possibility to change.

During our three week intense professional, collegial and holiday experience in Kenya, it is easy to imagine the great number of 'stories from the borderlands' that exist to be told. There are certainly many more than what can be contained in a study such as this and more than what would suffice to demonstrate the thesis at hand – our 'stories to live by' shift through, literally through, the experiences we have. I have therefore chosen to write and to present four 'stories from the borderlands.' These four are chosen for the following reasons: they are stories of moments in which all five of us Canadian teachers shared to differing degrees; they represent narrative inquiry's attention to situation, continuity and interaction; they are stories that initiated enough wonder that we really wanted to talk about them in our conversations together both during and after our time in Kenya; they are stories that serve as representatives of the many stories I do not tell but to which some of the teacher participants refer; they are stories which continue to be re-told to each other and to our other friends, family and colleagues since coming back to Canada; and they are stories which have made each of us think and wonder and reflect a little differently about our own 'stories to live by.' They are therefore stories that serve as "disruption and essential counterpoint" (Steedman, 1986, p. 22).

Each of the following four stories is offered in two parts. One part, typed in Italic script, is my telling of the moment or moments. These are my recollections offered from my memories, triggered by my photographs, and told in my voice. The other part of each story, typed in regular font, is an account of the conversations amongst the five of us that these moments generated. I again am the writer but, in this part of each story, I rely on my field notes to offer a sense of what Ken, Dana, Larry and Wendy were each thinking and how they were each responding to the moments of each story while we were living in the midst.

And we were 'living in the midst.' The interactions I describe in the conversation part of each story all took place in Mitaboni. In fact, they all took place in the cottage, in the living/office/dining room, with momentary sojourns into the kitchen for snacks of pineapple and sesame wafers and tea and soda.

Mitaboni is a very small two-street town. If a person was all of sudden transported to one end of one of the streets without being given any hint of being in Kenya, Africa, the person might think that he or she had been transplanted on to a movie set of the western frontier towns in the early 1900's. The street is dry and dusty, no pavement. The small single story buildings, constructed of concrete blocks and plastered with bright washed colours, line either side of the street. This leaves hardly any room for pedestrians to walk when a cart, being pulled by two oxen, lumbers its way along pulling an over-sized load of hay. There are no horses but we hear that there have been some. Donkeys and goats and stray dogs and stray chickens own the streets. I once asked a man how one could tell which chickens belonged to whom. He told me that you wait until the evening because the chickens all return to their own homes for the night. I laughed at the thought of a chicken wandering into my yard, coming up the steps and settling into the corner of my living room when it was time to go to bed. He laughed at the preposterous idea that a dog would be given such a privilege – they don't earn you any income and can't help you feed your family.

The early 1900's scene does, of course, contain evidence that the 21st century has come even to Mitaboni. The matatu buses are painted in the neon psychedelic colours of the sixties – the 20th century lingers. Their slogans, boldly painted on the front, sides and back, are the sentinels of a global world – "Tiger Woods Reigns," "Elvis Lives," "WWF Forever," "God Have Mercy." The economy seems to be all right. There are patrons in the tailor shop and the carpenter's garage. Someone is getting his teeth worked on – I hope it is by a dentist. Another is getting a haircut and the shoe shine stands are busy. The pool hall is full. I guess this is good for the pool hall owner but not so good for the men who are in it. There isn't a cyber café yet in Mitaboni but the druggist does have a photocopier. There are two telephone booths, one by the post office and the other by the food shop where we buy our sodas. We have not been able to reach Canada on either of them. Ken is quite convinced that they are only hooked up to call each other. Ah, the wonders of technology and the complete reliance on infrastructure.

The cottage where we are staying is on the Africa Brotherhood Church's compound. The property that is home to a church, an office building, a dining hall, three classrooms, two dormitories, two sets of outhouses and five cottages is bounded only by a two stranded barb wire fence. The dirt road entrance to the compound is just a three minute walk from the end of the nearest of the town's two streets. A woman sits at that corner. On a piece of paper she awkwardly makes a pencil scratch every time a motorized vehicle goes by. The town council is hoping to prove to the Machakos area government that their town deserves asphalt. Our cottage is on the other side of the yard and we have to walk by all the other buildings to get to it. Walking by the bougainvillea bush and the poinsettia, mango, and papaya trees is reason enough for the trek.

The screen door at the front of the cottage, in the middle, is up a couple of steps and opens into a three foot square porch. It is just big enough to allow one person to stand in from the rain and the mosquitoes while the padlock gets released. The door opens into the main room which functions as office, living and dining room all in one. On the left are two bedrooms, partitioned so as to make three, and over on the right is the doorway that leads to the kitchen and the bathroom. There won't be any soaks in the tub during these weeks but we do have a luxury of another kind – a brand new electric fridge. Now, if we could only count on there being electricity.

We have brought a lot of bottled water for drinking. Still, we have to boil all the water we use for washing any vegetables or fruit and for doing the dishes. The only meal we prepare here is breakfast – and it's a good one. Fresh fruit of all kinds, a selection of cereals, yoghurt, cheese, eggs that can't get any fresher, juice, toast grilled under a burner that sits where most range fans do back home – and tea. We broke the French press coffee pot the first day so the Kenyan coffee we bought especially sits untouched. Desperate measures have been taken to attempt to make a cup. We have given up and I vow to get a Melita drip into the suitcase of the next Canadian who plans to come. Our lunches and dinners are taken with the teachers at the dining hall. The meals there certainly do fill you up and they are consistent – it's the same menu every meal. That's not completely true. The staple dish is most often ugali. Ken describes it as a cornmeal paste the consistency of boiled cardboard that feels like a barium deposit in your stomach. The variety I find myself wishing for as I enter the dining hall each time is rice. My wish comes true about a third of the time. So it is either ugali or rice with a tomato broth, potato and goat meat stew and muthukoi, a maize and bean mixture that rivals the ugali on its density. Our hearts perform leaps of joy when we see boiled cabbage or chapattis alongside.

But evenings are our time again. After dinner, the five of us make our way up the road past the bougainvillea bush to the cottage. We get changed into our lounge clothes, pull out the snacks, and settle into any one of the plastic lawn chairs, throw cushion benches, rattan woven basket chair, or up to the dining room table that allows a couple of us to spread out the paper. After a bit of organizational attention and after the faded fabric coverings are all pulled across the windows, I pull out my tape recorder, the signal for the conversation to begin.

Dissecting Trays

"Thirty of these aluminum dissecting trays." I remember Ken saying those exact words when he brought them to our meeting at Dana's back in June. Ken didn't usually bring a lot of stuff to our meetings. He is so full of good ideas that he doesn't seem to need a lot of paper prompting. The rest of us had brought articles and binders and old textbooks – all to assist us with the planning and preparation we needed to do for the courses in Kenya. But that night last June, Ken had brought with him a fair sized cardboard box containing "thirty of these aluminum dissecting trays."

He tried to convince us that they didn't weigh much even though they have this tar in the bottom. He seemed not to know that the tar was there so that the stickpins would be able to keep the specimen in place. But, his school was throwing them out and he thought that one of the Kenyan biology teachers might be able to use them. And, he was hoping that one of us might have room in our luggage to help him transport them. It was such a little thing in the beginning. Ken noticed that these trays were being thrown out and thought someone might be able to use them if we could just get them to Kenya.

None of us had any extra room. Our bags were full of necessities for the courses. Wendy had been able to get two suitcases full of non-fiction and fiction books donated from publishing houses. Dana and another teacher had organized her school's leadership class into raising some money in order to purchase some clipboards. And there were the briefcases donated by the Alberta Teachers' Association and the world maps that had been laminated. And there were also the articles for discussion and chart paper and markers and tape and pens and chalk. Yes, we even brought the chalk. So the dissecting trays stayed packed in that cardboard box which was supposed to only be an interim container on their way to Kenya. But, on Larry's ticket, it was given a baggage sticker all its own. And the string that was tied around it was quite frayed by the time it arrived in Nairobi.

Charles teaches biology at a girls' school near the Somalia border. The trip to Mitaboni was two days long because he had to take one matatu bus into Nairobi and stay over night before he could catch another matatu going in the direction of Mitaboni. One day, he told some of his group members that the one single microscope he has in his classroom is simply insufficient for his classes of approximately fifty students each. He quickly apologized. He ought not complain. At least his school had a microscope. He knows of others that do not have one. The first time the students at those schools will see a microscope will be at the national final biology exam.

Ken was in that group. He could not offer Charles a microscope but he did have that box of dissecting trays. After class one day, Ken invited Charles up to the cottage so that he could look at the dissecting trays to see if they might be at all useful. Ken did say that Charles was really thankful but Ken was more struck by the fact that when he and Charles got to the door of the cottage, Charles did not go in. He stood outside. He waited by the steps and let the screen door close behind Ken. Thirty-eight years after independence and still the black man waited outside the white man's house. I wasn't there but I can imagine Ken's gracious insistence as he invited Charles in. I can imagine the anticipation Charles felt as he saw the box being opened on his behalf. I can imagine Ken apologizing for the dents and the scrapes on the used trays. And I can imagine the leaps Charles' heart made when he held them in his hands. And it would have been his heart because Charles is not one to let his face do the dancing.

I know that he was thrilled. I know without one hint of doubt. I know because of a picture I have captured in my mind's eye. It is of the Kenyan teachers leaving Mitaboni after our final class. A white matatu bus came into the school compound to take as many teachers who could fit the three kilometer drive out to the main junction. From there,

they would go their separate ways on other buses. The matatu was jammed full of precious cargo: suitcases full of their best clothes for they had come to Mitaboni with their finest; the distinctive turquoise green ATA briefcases which were now full of notes and books and assignments and articles and manuals; and of course the teachers – new friends and colleagues in a common work. The suitcases and the briefcases were packed in every available space: under benches, between feet, behind the driver, on top of the spare tire, under elbows. And then there was the box. It was the same plain cardboard box tied with fraying string and tagged for Nairobi that Ken had brought to our meeting and was now sitting proudly on, and being protectively held by Charles. He would not put it aside. He would not stash it away. He would not let it go for it contained the precious gift of the dissecting trays.

That was pretty much it really. Ken, Larry and the airline, managed to get the discarded dissecting trays to Mitaboni and they were given to a biology teacher whose school has very limited resources. We got them there and we gave them away. On the one hand, it was all rather like deciding to carry empty bottles or tin cans or tin trays, for that matter, to the recycling depot rather than just putting them in the garbage bag along with the other trash. It was a little inconvenient but not a sacrifice. On the other hand, the dissecting trays were an enormous contribution to Charles, to his students and to his school. We gave them away and, other than Ken telling us about Charles remaining outside of the cottage when he had invited him up, and other than my noticing the care Charles gave to the box as he and the other teachers left Mitaboni, we did not say anything else about them until we were back in Canada. Sometimes, 'stories from the borderlands' do not generate a lot of conversation. Sometimes, they just happen and their reverberations are not felt until much later, when some other story triggers its retelling.

In October, after we were all back on our familiar landscapes, Ken received a letter dated September 27th from Charles and shared it with us at one of our group meetings.

> Dear Ken:
>
> Receive greetings from me and my family. It is my prayer that God will continue giving you good health and strength so that you may go on serving him through teaching.
>
> Here we are fine and doing well having opened school for the third term on 10th September. I am trying as much as possible to change from my traditional lecture style of teaching to the various strategies Dana and Wendy taught us at Mitaboni in August. My students are liking the new teaching strategies because they enable active student participation in their learning process.
>
> The gift you brought to me (dissecting kits and trays) were well received in the school. The students were very much excited because they had never seen this equipment in the school. The head teacher and my colleagues were very happy. The head teacher asked me to write to you and sincerely thank you. On my behalf and that of my school community, I sincerely thank you for this act of kindness. Please thank your colleague (Biology Teacher) on our behalf and tell

him that the kits and trays will go a long way in assisting students in this school for many years.

Ken, we shall always mention you in our prayers and we believe that God will bless you because through him you have been a blessing to us. We pray that you will continue in that spirit not only in helping us but also helping others whenever you have an opportunity to do so (Galatians 6:10).

Brother, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Yours Sincerely,
Charles
(Printed with Charles' permission.)

Welded Signs

Before going to Kenya, the five of us spent a lot of time working on the class sessions that we would lead for each other and our Kenyan colleagues. During our last group time prior to going to Kenya, we together deliberately walked through the courses we had prepared, lesson by lesson. It was a time of great anticipation. After the last lesson had been explained, Dana's response was, "I love it. I'm looking forward to taking the course" (Group Conversation, June 13, 2001). Larry agreed, "Yea, that's right. I expect to learn a lot" (Group Conversation, June 13, 2001). Wendy always added her growing anticipation by phone or by e-mail: "I feel like I'm tagging along just so I can let stuff rub off on me!" (E-mail, March 3, 2001). Ken joked, "Note to self – look up the word 'rubric' in the dictionary. … This is all the stuff I never got in my B. Ed.!" (Group Conversation June 13, 2001).

The anticipation that began to build in our conversations in Dana's living room before we went to Kenya, continued to grow as we worked and lived together in Mitaboni. As the second week of teaching approached, the week in which Larry, Dana and Wendy would be taking the lead, the anticipation Ken and I were experiencing intensified. We were so looking forward to learning what these three colleagues had prepared to present that I think they sometimes thought us insincere in our affirmations. Larry's contribution was so much a part of his practice that he questioned its helpfulness and its relevance. This was similar to what both Dana and Wendy expressed. In addition, Wendy struggled with the fact that her experience and her preparation had centered on the early primary grades and that there were more secondary teachers amongst the group of Kenyan colleagues than we had expected. Because of this, Larry, Dana and Wendy spent part of the evenings and even part of some days during the first week of teaching, when Ken and I were taking the lead, to rework some of their preparations.

In one such rework session in the evening of that first week, Wendy asked our opinion about a resource she had brought with her. "Would this be a handy reference sheet for them (the Kenyan teachers) to have?" (Group Conversation, August 15, 2001).

Ken responded,

> As in, should we Xerox this this week-end? Yes. Oh you guys, this is going to be so good (laughter and high 5's). I'm going to see if I can get credit for this somehow (laughter). I'll tell my principal, 'please don't fire me. I'm working on my teaching!' (laughter). This is why I want my colleagues to come here. I have some colleagues who … oh, Africa is not supposed to be about them learning how to teach (laughter), but they could learn some things. This is going to be a great week. Let's make extra copies of that sheet (Group Conversation, August 15, 2001.

Dana wanted to make sure that we would make enough copies that we would each get one as well for she confessed that she would be sharing the learning that she was receiving with the staff at her school. "45 copies! … I am collecting things for my colleagues too" (Group Conversation, August 15, 2001).

This confession of Dana's reverberated in Ken and he offered a confession of his own.

> I am not calling you this but sometimes I feel like, you guys, I'm faking this whole thing. 'Don't you know?' No, they don't. They are copying things down. … [W]hat if it is all role play? (laughter). I stand there thinking, 'what would Dana do right now?' (laughter). And it has worked for three days! (Group Conversation, August 15, 2001).

I picked up on Ken's question reducing it to the chantable abbreviation of WWDD! And Ken continued to push at its possibilities by offering, "And WWWD?! The last two days of the week will be 'What Would Wendy Do?!' (laughter). … There is actually a WWWD club on the campus now and they are all following you (laughter)" (Group Conversation, August 15, 2001).

Ken and I often used these phrases to summarize the significant learning that he and I were receiving from Larry, Dana and Wendy. WWLD stood for 'What Would Larry Do?' WWDD stood for 'What Would Dana Do?' And WWWD stood for 'What Would Wendy Do?' All three are a spin off a popular phrase in North American Evangelical Christian circles of WWJD – 'What Would Jesus Do?' During one of his class sessions on classroom management, Larry had told us that, on especially bad days in the classroom, he often finds himself asking this very question.

On the Tuesday of the second week, Ken and I went to the town's welding shop and asked the workers there to make for us three metal signs each bearing the respective four initials.

The anticipation for the second week of class that Ken and I felt became reality as we had the privilege of learning from our three colleagues. Ken often expressed his appreciation.

> I don't want this to turn into Ken's catharsis counselling week okay but I really do feel like I hardly know any of this stuff. I get through by the seat of my pants because I am actually intuitively able to do it. But I don't know this vocabulary. I don't know these techniques. My head is just spinning. I think this is going to be like getting a B. Ed. in a week. So right now I feel like I have more revising to do [on my plans for this year] than I did this morning at 8 o'clock. I would just like to change everything. I already have my first unit's outline Xeroxed (for the coming school year) but they need to be changed (laughter) (Group Conversation, August 20, 2001).

As we thought of and talked about the learning we were all experiencing from one another in Mitaboni, our reflections connected with other significant stories of learning. Wendy offered the story of one of her colleagues in her school whose professional learning, learning in which she had participated, had positively impacted his teaching life.

> [T]his year has been really interesting, particularly for this one fellow [in my school] who is a grade one teacher. I think he was getting ready to quit or take a leave of absence or whatever because he was so burnt out. He had no enjoyment any more. It was interesting because there were certain workshops that I thought would be really good for him to go to. There is not a lot available with my own school district but there were a few in Toronto that I thought would be really good for him and one in Mississauga. And I also kept shoving books at him that I thought he would be interested in. It was kind of like a fire got lit under him again. He is just so excited. People kind of get tired of hearing about Les' stories because he will try a new strategy or a new method and he is always running up to me and telling me what he has tried. He is just so excited about what is happening. For the first time in about twelve years, he feels like he knows how to teach reading. That has been really exciting and it has been quite infectious in some ways. I don't think I have been saying anything different for the last three years. I think next year will be even better. We have met twice already in July to start planning things for September so it will be good (Group Conversation, August 20, 2001).

Ken also offered a story of a time of significant learning for him, learning that evidenced itself in Larry's teaching life.

> When I did the reading for this research (on teacher vitality) four years ago, I read quite widely and did a number of ERIC searches on teacher burn-out, teacher vitality and so on. I forget how many hits there were on teacher burn-out, something like 18,000 (laughter). On teacher vitality there was something like sixteen. 'Isn't that interesting,' I thought. So many people manage to knock off a master's degree in education by studying teacher burn-out rather than teacher vitality. We came across this one study of Swiss teachers, which was a bit too simplistic, but it said most teachers in their study either ended up bitter or serene. These are the two words they used. We hadn't done our interviews yet. We were just reading but I thought – bitter and serene, interesting contrasts for teachers'

careers. So we got interested in the middle years of teachers' careers compared to other careers because, if you are at Ford Corporation and just wrapping electrical tape, you can still aspire to be president. But in a teacher's career, all you can aspire to is a new group of clients next September, unless you are dying to be a principal. So if you love teaching, you are in a quote 'flat career.' You are facing 33 more years without any quote 'promotions.' So we were asking, 'can we find people who don't conceive of their work that way?' Can we find people who say, 'yea, I want to teach? I am here to teach and every September I have a new batch of clients and I am happy.' And we did find people. But I think [those] people who get passed over or become administrators, for example, have in one sense good reason to become bitter. And then I look at you [Larry] and I think, 'wow, you ended up so serene.' Not that you don't have anything on your plate. I just mean that you are happy. And you have a life and you aren't a crank. So congratulations. You did it right (laughter and cheers) (Group Conversation, August 20, 2001).

While Larry assured us that there were times when he indeed was a "crank," Ken continued his reflection, a reflection that brought us back to our immediate experience of learning from one another and which generated some fun.

Ken: "I did my M. Ed. thesis on Ivan Illich on *De-Schooling Society* and, of course I was younger then. I was all for blowing up schools and connecting teachers with learners, you know. The guy made me think about education. That's what I wish I could have with my colleagues, just some excuse to talk about why we do what we do and how we could do it differently. Maybe you have to go to a little town with no electricity or phone to have good conversations" (laughter) ...

Larry: "Half way around the world."

Ken: "That's pretty sobering. We could just bill it as ... It costs $3000 to go to this educators' retreat. It is a working retreat in a secluded spot in the hills."

Larry: "In a homey cottage with geckos."

Carla: "Where you can eat ugali."

Larry: "I was just thinking, 'what if [that gecko] crawls into my suitcase and I take him home?' (laughter)"

Wendy: "We would have geckos in Alberta if they could survive the winter" (Group Conversation, August 20, 2001).

On the last Friday, while Larry, Dana and Wendy were responding to final comments from our Kenyan colleagues, and while the three of them thought Ken and I were calculating the final grades up at the cottage, Ken and I hurried into town to purchase the completed metal signs, the WWLD, WWDD and WWWD signs, from the welding shop.

The master welder, a man who looked like he had barely reached his twenties, was expecting us. He and his four partners – or were they his employees or apprentices or cousins or friends or some combination of all of the above, I am not sure which, had completed our request admirably. It didn't seem that they were working on any other

project. Ours had taken precedence. And ours had created much intrigue. But they had done what we asked. They had used the equipment that they usually use on oxen carts and matatu bus repairs and window guards, to do the most delicate job, I am sure, they have ever attempted. The letters stood, four inches high, on a bar cut from the same half inch bar of iron. Each joint knuckled with too much solder but the silver spray paint made the ten-inch signs gleam like the most expensive, most alluring, most relevant, billboards in the city.

They were happy, delighted actually, in a serious and proud kind of way, to have their pictures taken with their masterpieces. They stood, the five of them, proudly, looking as sophisticated and nonchalant as they could, in front of the main garage door of the shop and under the hand-painted sign – 'General Welding & Battery Charging.' Diversification is good for business.

We paid them our agreed price and a little extra and ran, as only two forty-five-ish year olds can, back to the compound. They would be wondering why it was taking us so long to get the marking done and they were probably waiting to be able to hand back the assignments so that the debriefing could take place. They would be hoping that we would return quickly so that the finale could begin.

That Friday evening, after all our teaching was finished, and after we had said farewell to our Kenyan colleagues, and during a fabulous dinner at what had become our favourite restaurant in Nairobi, Ken and I honoured our three friends with the symbolic gifts of WWDD, WWLD and WWWD, in gratitude for the learning they inspired in each of us.

<u>The Evangelist</u>

It's 4:30 p.m. and here he goes again. I can't believe this guy. Everyday this week at this time he starts up on his two hour verbal rampage. He is way over in the town square, a good ten minutes away, and yet his screaming voice is interrupting our conversations. A wooden platform has been erected right in the very place where I buy fresh avocados and tomatoes, right in the place where the lady who is always dressed in red, sits, takes off her sandals and rubs her feet. Huge speakers sit on either end so that the muffled and the seemingly angry love of Jesus can pierce the ear of anyone within range. I can't imagine it piercing any hearts.

This man, this black Kenyan middle-aged man, dressed in designer finest, jumps and spins and gallops as he runs back and forth across his stage – his hand clutching the microphone; his arm holding it to his lips; his words yelling love; his demeanor feigning intimacy. People gather but do not come too close. These villages do not get much public entertainment so this man is definitely an attraction. Women walk by. Their steps slow down but they don't stop. They look as they go but they have many other more pressing things to do before the sun goes down. The men sit and watch expressionless. It is the same look that I have seen on the faces of men as they sit and watch a road crew

repair a pothole. The children are intrigued. At least until we come along. Then we are much more of a spectacle than this man can ever hope to be. We suspect he wishes we would go away. Competition is not good for business. The show is free. Well, sort of. A good part of his speech is a demand for money to pay for the generosity of his presence. What a servant! What a Christian!

The Kenyan teachers refer to him as 'The Evangelist.' They don't know which Christian denomination he represents but Lenah wonders why Canadian Christians preach like this. Canadian Christians! I can't believe what she is saying. 'Yes,' she tried to convince us. 'This style of preaching comes from Canada!'

How can this possibly be? How can I be responsible for this harassment? Who are these Canadians who have come to this country with this product? Who let Canadians like this into this country? Which Canadians have the gall to think this is good and helpful and justice producing? Which Kenyans could possibly think that this is worth reproducing? Is it to this that our Kenyan colleagues associate us? Am I one of these same Canadians? Am I, just by being here, modelling teaching to these teachers just like those who modelled preaching to this man? Can our Kenyan colleagues see a difference between this man's and my Christian expression? Can they see a difference between his and my teaching passions?

Then Lenah and Julianna and Gideon and a few others begin to mimic 'The Evangelist.' They hold their make-believe microphones up to their lips. They start to swing their free arms from side to side as they jump and spin and gallop there in the courtyard on their pretend platform. They start yelling words and phrases that are the most precious ever to us but they sound hollow and mock-filled, like those of what we imagine came from the mouths of the once beloved now accusers of Jesus as he walked the hill to Golgotha.

Her next words are still ringing in my ears. As they tired of their impersonation or perhaps as pretend came too close to truth, Lenah whispered in confession and in thanksgiving, 'God must certainly have a lot of patience with all of us.'

In our evening conversations together, we followed the reverberations of 'The Evangelist' in the many directions it took us. We tried to figure out what constitutes a genuine expression of faith. Why did we respond to 'The Evangelist' with his, some would say, theologically accurate message, as being insincere? And why did we experience the spiritual expression of the Kenyan teachers, even with their evangelical clichés and choruses expressing questionable theology, as genuine? Both types of expression, the Evangelist's and the Kenyan teachers', kept us wondering for a long time.

We talked about just how strange it was for some of us to talk about God and teaching together at all. Dana offered this reflection, an insight with which Larry agreed.

> This doesn't have anything to do really with what happened today except that because I teach in a public system, just having conversations with people who

> couch everything in Christian terms and language just really threw me. It didn't put me out of my comfort zone or anything. It was just so unusual. You don't have conversations like this. Even when Wendy and I discuss school, it is not in those terms. So it was interesting, a different experience for me to talk openly about faith and how it affects teaching. … I don't encounter it. I talk with Debbie all the time and she teaches in a Christian school. We don't have discussions about this so it is probably culture (Group Conversation, August 13, 2001).

Ken has the opposite experience at his school. The language there is infused with religious terms.

> [S]omewhere between Debbie's school and my school there is probably a balance. … I went with a colleague to another colleague's wedding in Grand Prairie. Jo-Ann and I have calculated this out that whenever you are driving more than 390 kilometers in a week, you can rent a car from Avis cheaper than you can drive your car. You don't need all of the details. So I rented a car and anyway, I met her at the Avis at the Mayfield Inn and we went to Grand Prairie. About six minutes into it she said, 'you know, I was praying to God that He would help me solve this thing about how we were going to get there and this is just a wonderful answer to prayer.' I thought, 'you've got a car. I've got two cars. There are about 90 rental agencies. You don't need to pray about this!' This is the language of my school.
>
> The vice-principal is in charge of the chapels. There is chapel coming up on the Friday say, and on the Tuesday when the secondary staff meet for our devotions, he'll say, 'Satan has been suggesting to me that I not do on Friday what I am thinking of doing. There is a real battle going on here.' I actually spoke to him once because I was so upset. I said, 'if you are a Christian, I don't think that Satan is battling at all. You might be thinking about chapel. You might be having doubts about chapel but I don't think that Satan is anywhere near you if you are a Christian – he doesn't even want to be in the neighbourhood. So don't make this into, like reading Milton, a cosmic thing going on. We are just planning chapel.' But God gets drawn into all this stuff. I think it is a way of escaping responsibility for some people (Group Conversation, August 13, 2001).

We together wondered about what it is about the language and the way it is used that makes it seem either genuine or not. Ken seemed to think that it has something to do with the context – praying for a means of transportation when numerous options are readily available, did not seem genuine.

> [However,] if I had to ride to here on a bus in Kenya, it would be a genuine prayer to God and genuine thanks afterwards (laughter). … God does care. He cares about even the sparrow falling. (Group Conversation, August 13, 2001).

Dana continued to offer us her wonderings.

> [It is] just a different way of thinking about it. For example, Ilumba was talking about if I were to give him a pencil. Yes, I would have given him the pencil but it was God acting through me. … Or when we talked about God's will and God's will being in everything. We didn't get into it really but for me, I think we are free to choose. God's will does not decide which cereal I eat. All of my choices and actions do not come from God's will (Group Conversation, August 13, 2001).

Larry too added his perspective.

> When we are living a life of faith, we are not far out of God's reach in any case. Some people seem to be focused on that all the time. I know of a couple – I don't want to get onto them either, but it's like you can't eat the peas until you pray over them. It can be carried to ludicrous lengths (Group Conversation, August 13, 2001).

Wendy reflected on the reality that she too, like Dana, has never had a lot of chances to integrate her faith life and her teaching life. She found it refreshing to be in an environment where we all could be overt with our faith experience. Being able to begin each day with a devotional talk was something that she really enjoyed. That and the singing of the Kenyan teachers, not the Evangelist's preaching, touched her deeply.

We wondered if the Kenyan teachers' singing of songs of worship had something to do with our experience of the genuineness of their spiritual expression. First, to be in a teacher professional development course and have times of singing, let alone singing songs of worship, was a unique experience in itself. And second, we sensed a difference between the singing of British songs in English and the singing of the songs in the Kenyans' first languages of Kikamba and Kiswahili. Was it the sound, the harmonies, the rhythm? Was it our own past experiences of church singing that played a part? What and why was it that the Canadians sensed a difference when the Kenyans seemed at ease with their expression in both?

The presence of 'The Evangelist' kept us from responding too quickly with too simplistic of answers to these and many other questions. His faith expression was something to which neither our Kenyan colleagues nor the Canadians responded favourably. His expression was perceived by the Canadians as being a Kenyan phenomenon, but that phenomenon did not fit with our relational experience with our Kenyan colleagues. And his expression was perceived by the Kenyans as being a Canadian phenomenon, but one that did not seem to fit with their experience of us either. He was a "disruption and essential counterpoint."

Amsterdam

We are ready. We have had a great time. We have had great conversation. We have met amazing people. We have seen the lions and smelled the garbage smoke and touched the bougainvillea petals and survived the ugali and heard the matatu horns of

Kenya. We have reconnected with some of what we celebrate about being teachers and learned much about how to become better teachers. But, we are ready to go home. Wendy has never been away from Daniel for this long before. Dana aches for Caleb and Grant. Larry wants to get home so that he can get back to Kenya again, this time with his wife Lou. Ken longs for the rest and deep comfort he experiences when he is with his family. And I am fantasizing about a lazy Saturday morning with Gary, sitting on the balcony in the August sunshine drinking lattés and reading the newspaper. We are ready.

There had been so much to think about and to organize before getting to Kenya that our plans for getting home have been given much less attention. The hotel room in Amsterdam is booked for Dana, Wendy and I, but that is it for the plans. Larry has been thinking about staying in Kenya a bit longer so, even though he is booked on our same flight, he has been planning to get the reservation changed and has not wanted any commitment to Amsterdam. Ken booked his flights on his own and has been able to get the night flight out of Nairobi – this gives him one more day in Nairobi and saves the expense of accommodation in Europe. But the plan does not seem to fit anymore. We want to get home but we don't want to have to part until we absolutely have to. We want to be in Amsterdam together.

On our way back into Nairobi from Mitaboni, as soon as we are within range, we borrow Karanja's cell phone and call the airlines to see if we can get Ken's ticket changed. We don't want to leave Kenya without him. We want him on our flight. We want him with us when we take the train into Amsterdam and when we revel in the comfort of being back in a familiar world and when we go for a walk past Anne Frank's house and when we go out for Indonesian food – when we arrive home. All we can do, we are told, is to arrive at the airport very early, get Ken's name on the stand-by list and hope that room is available. This is exactly what we do.

When the final security call came for the four of us who had boarding passes, we said our good-byes to Ken still hoping that he would be joining us in a few minutes. Jumping for joy in an airport might be embarrassing for some but it wasn't for us. Seeing Ken coming up the escalator ready to board our flight sent us right off the ground. High 5's all around. Reunion, sweet reunion, and we have only been apart for fifteen minutes. We departed Nairobi at 10:15 that Saturday morning and at 5:45 that afternoon, when we landed in Amsterdam, the euphoria of sharing a homecoming was still flying high.

Amsterdam's city center is a half hour train ride from the airport. The airline has given us the luxury of checking our bags straight through to Canada so our hands and backs are as free as our hearts and our minds. We are together and we are back in what we can't help but feel as a place of our own. Green fields and organized highways and undented recent model cars whiz by. Most of the people on the train look like us and we them. We can't understand all the conversations nor read all the signs but it does not seem to matter as much. We don't stand out and we find ourselves exhaling the strangeness of Kenya, breathing in the atmosphere of rest, sighing away the uncertainty

of being so far from home, and inhaling the comfort of knowing what to expect. We are at home when we know what to expect.

We know what to expect from a four star European hotel that caters to North American visitors. There will be fresh crisp white sheets on a bed that does not smell of mothballs and a shower without mildew and spiders and with massaging water pressure. The possibility of a bathtub in which to soak away the red dust and the far away uncertainties may be too much to hope for. But there will certainly be drinking water from the tap, the ability to brush our teeth in the sink, coffee with no sugar, the freedom to wear pants, telephones that work, e-mail access, and fresh salad. There will not be dogs barking at four and roosters alarming at five and matatu horns calling at six. There will not be mosquito nets with which to contend nor stale smelling towels nor the need to collect every crumb to keep the cockroaches away. We know what to expect.

And we know what to expect from being in a western European multi-ethnic but predominantly Caucasian cosmopolitan city. There will be friends conversing at outdoor cafés, and couples strolling by the canals and art galleries with treasures, and souvenir shops with windmills, and restaurants too many to count, and bicycles with wicker baskets, and corner flower stalls with sun flowers and tulips, and tour groups of students and seniors.

Yes, we can expect all this. Yes, we are in the familiar. And yes, this is what we are finding and seeing and experiencing. But what about all this ... other? Why can I not bear to look? Why are we silent? Why is Ken crying? Why did I think this was like home? Why do I long for Mitaboni?

There are people in the gutters, slumped over, murmuring to themselves. There is garbage – empty cans and bottles, used condoms and needles, newspapers, rotting food all soaked in urine. And noise – sirens and screams and music and horns and bicycle bells and swearing and cat calls and whistles and dogs and doors and brakes and slot machines and vendors and buskers and laughter and cries. There are women, almost completely unclothed, in bars serving drinks and in storefront windows selling themselves. There are kids crying in exhaustion and youth hanging in groups. There are banks with guards at the door and churches with boards over the windows and nightclubs with bouncers at the entrance and schools with locked iron gates around their yards.

We are together. But this is not home.

Earlier I wrote, "Sometimes, 'stories from the borderlands' do not generate a lot of conversation." In the case of the 'dissecting trays' story, there was not much more to discuss – we brought the trays and we gave them away. In this case however, the power of our encounter with Amsterdam, and with our own expectations, simply left us speechless. There was much to talk about but we could not talk about it just then. Was it because we were not feeling the safety home provides so that conversation can happen? Was it because this was our home and we could not bring ourselves to admit it? Was it because our longing for home overtook even the slightest distance that reflection

requires? For whatever reason or reasons, we did not talk about Amsterdam until we were back on the familiar of our Canadian landscapes. Sometimes, 'stories from the borderlands,' stories of 'disruption and essential counterpoint,' take a long time to tell.

Chapter Six:
'STORIES TO LIVE BY' RETOLD

The previous two chapters each tell a collection of stories. In the 'stories to live by' chapter, I tell stories of how the five of us are in our worlds. They are accounts of our storied identities as people and as teachers, accounts that were elicited through conversations as we thought about and prepared for our time in Kenya. The 'stories from the borderlands' are stories of another kind. They are stories of four events or moments – experiences, which happened during our time away and stories that serve as "disruption and essential counterpoint" (Steedman, 1986, p. 22) to our 'stories to live by.' My intention in this chapter is to reveal and to demonstrate narratively just how it is that our 'stories to live by' have shifted because of their intersection with 'stories from the borderlands.'

I have been thinking a lot about the word 'shift.' It is one of the words which has taken on new meaning from reading the work of Connelly and Clandinin (1999) and from listening closely to the stories the teacher participants were telling me. As I began this study, I was thinking more about the word 'change,' about how it is that our experiences change us – change our identities, change who we are in our worlds. In my first conversation with Dana after our return from Kenya, I asked how it was that she thought that being in Kenya changed her. Her response was along the line that she did not think that change was the right word. What she experienced was a slight movement in another direction (Individual Conversation, September 19, 2001). I decided to think about 'a slight movement in another direction' as a shift, not a change, in our identities.

Shifts can be difficult to detect. Perhaps this is why I prefer words like 'change' and 'transformation.' These concepts generate thoughts of distinctiveness, readily visible differences between what was and what now is: I was once like that and now I am like this. These tend to be thought of as noticeable and dramatic reversals of character.

Teachers often talk about this. When we talk about our students, we often stand in the moment and reflect back on just how much this student or that student has changed over the year or years we have had him or her in our classroom. We talk like this in regards to our colleagues and our schools and our students' parents and our schools' communities as well. When we do so, I think that we are often articulating that which has become visible. For change to become visible, it needs a lot of time. It needs a whole series of shifts, slight movements in new directions. Perhaps change in our identities can be thought of as a series of shifts that take place over time during which many experiences have been encountered and thus affect who we are in our worlds.

But this study is about just one adventure – going to Kenya to participate in a teacher professional development project. And this adventure is relatively short – three weeks all together, not a whole school year. In order to understand how teachers' identities are 'changed' and 'transformed' through the experiences they have, we need first to be attentive to the shifts. The following attempts to do just this.

This chapter retells our 'stories to live by.' It is again my telling of the stories of how I have experienced each of us in our worlds – my titles, my choice of content and form fashioned out of my relationship with each of the participants and out of our community together. It is a retelling that is in light of each of us having experienced 'stories from the borderlands' – the four stories I chose to tell in the last chapter and other stories that I chose not to tell. Some of these other stories surface in the words of the teacher participants. The retelling is in hope of helping us each see the shifts that have taken place in our identities, in how we are in our worlds.

> We retell our stories, remake the past. This is inevitable. Moreover, it is good. To do so is the essence of growth and, for Dewey, is an element in the criteria for judging the value of experience. Dewey's reconstruction of experience (for us the retelling and reliving of stories) is good in that it defines growth. Enhancing personal and social growth is one of the purposes of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 85).

A shift may be a confirmation of some kind, an assertion that the way I was in my world before experiencing the borderlands, is the way I will continue to be. It might be an affirmation – how I was is the way I want to continue to be. It might be a reinforcement of some kind. Or, a shift in our 'stories to live by' might occur because we are offered a new perspective or given the opportunity to ask a new question. In the following '*Stories to Live By' Retold*, you will read about the same five people. It may be helpful to read the following pages with a marker in Chapter Four so that it is easy to refer to the first telling of our 'stories to live by.' The five of us will be familiar in the 'retold' stories for we have the same identities, the same ways of being in the world. But I hope that the 'slight movements in new directions' – the shifts in who we are, are also visible.

Ken's 'Stories to Live By' Retold

I. 'Becoming' Retold

One way to understand the 'Welded Signs' story is to see it as being about Ken's desire to continue to become a really good teacher. It has woven itself through this 'story to live by,' a reality that he is still coming to recognize.

> I don't think that my practice is going to be changed much by being in Africa Carla as much as by being in the class this week, which could have happened, well, it couldn't have happened anywhere else. That's the whole point. I have not taken a class in what, ten years. This is the first class I have taken. You have to get people who have Ph.D.'s in Mitaboni in order to get them to sit down and take a class (Group Conversation, August 22, 2001).

Before going to Kenya, Ken often talked about wishing that his colleagues could come to Mitaboni. One of his reasons for this was so they could learn to become better

teachers. He would catch himself on this and state that he knows the program in Kenya is not about Canadians becoming better teachers, but he came to live this story himself. He lived the story of 'becoming' while in Mitaboni. He embodies the story of someone on his staff whose teaching has improved because of being in Mitaboni and has come back to Canada committed to continue to live this story on his home landscape. He talked about this for the others on his staff, but he is the one who lived it.

> I was conscious of the great number of new methods I saw. I have set myself a realistic goal – I will implement one a week. This is the third week and I just did my third new method today. So my teaching got revolutionized by the second week of my time there. Initially, when I was sorting out the material when I got home I thought, 'I'll try to get this whole whack of ideas implemented this year.' And then I thought, 'you have about 38 or 40 teaching weeks, why don't you just do one a week?' So it has been interesting to see my students respond to what are genuinely better methods than the way I was doing it. It takes work but it is well worth it (Individual Conversation, September 17, 2001).

Because they have seen his excitement, Ken has invited a few of his colleagues at his current school to work through the summer course manual together. Ken's identity shifted through the experiences he had in Mitaboni and he will continue to shift as he shares his past learning with other colleagues in his home context.

Ken continues to live his 'story to live by' about becoming a really good teacher and he also continues to live the story about becoming a really good person. Being in Mitaboni has meant giving him some perspective and some contentment as he continues to develop in this direction.

> In the morning, I come out of the bathroom and all four of you are waiting for me. I think, 'this is not worth it people' (laughter). We could each put in about $300 and we could keep all the teachers in Nairobi for a week. They could have a good time. We could have a good time. You think, 'what am I doing in this stupid cottage with a septic field that is too full?' It is not relativism or cynicism at all, it is more that you have to be somewhere.
>
> Maybe it is part of my celebration of being fifty. I am not going to change the whole world. I know that. When I was twenty I thought I was. I am going to change a very small corner somewhere and if I can have some input into 38 Kenyan teachers' lives – forget Mukwilu's numbers [about just how many students these teachers will impact]. Just 38, 38 classrooms, then I will be satisfied. Or, for that matter, if I can affect a few of my colleagues, I'll say, 'this year was worth living.' In that sense, it is fun.
>
> I do wonder, there is a kind of arrogance and hubris to it. I still have all these questions about development, aid – that is a lot of money to spend for five white people to get to some little town. Those questions are still in my mind. On the other hand, the gratitude these Kenyan teachers have when you see them. [You saw it] the second week when their heads were spinning too. Maybe some of them are trying to implement one thing a week as well. That would make a big

> difference if 38 classrooms had a new thing happening each week, a new method (Individual Conversation, September 17, 2001).

Ken's 'story to live by' of 'becoming' is a story that he lives in his world through others and with others. "I learned a lot this week from you folks. This cottage has really been like a retreat, sort of an educators' retreat for me. We have gotten along really well. It has been good and we've had fun" (Group Conversation, August 22, 2001). He lived it through us and with us in Mitaboni. And he will continue to live it, with perhaps even more passion, through and with the colleagues at his school.

II. 'Finding Place' Retold

Ken found place with us in Mitaboni, an experience that is a dimension of the 'Welded Signs' story. He lived the 'finding place' 'story to live by' in Mitaboni with the group of us and, as much as he celebrates this, he continues to feel that he does not have that place with his colleagues in his school context.

> I feel like I made new friends. ... I thought we worked well together. I learned a lot from the other people. I feel like I was challenged collegially through our conversations and trying to put the course together. It was really a good experience – the kind of thing I wish I had with my colleagues actually. I said that there. I wish we could talk like that at work. ... I saw these people (our group) who are good at what they do. I felt like we were with leaders. They weren't just average teachers. They were top-notch folk. ... My observation is that – this group has been to Asia and Africa and so on. You know, here's Dana and Wendy and Larry comparing how dirty North Africa is. Oh, wow! (Individual Conversation, September 17, 2001).

This one of Ken's 'stories to live by' shifted in its level of intensity because of having been in Kenya. His experience with the other four of us made his desire to experience something similar with colleagues in his own school more pronounced.

Ken wonders if one of the reasons that he does not find place with his colleagues at home is because the five of us are a unique group of teachers whose abilities and commitment and life experiences set us apart from most schools' staffs, from his schools' staff.

> I think we were [a unique group]. Many times especially at teacher convention days I think, 'the public is right.' As a lot, we aren't that bright and we're not that interesting. You know the jokes about the faculty of education get the people who can't get into other faculties and so on? I think, 'well maybe the standard is rising but it is not rising everywhere.' I regularly meet teachers who were probably below average university students (laughter). It doesn't mean that they are below average in population but in the 36% or whatever that goes to university. I think, 'you are probably in the bottom half and you fell into teaching.' I feel bad because I would like sharp students to be attracted to

> teaching. Of the teachers I know, Dana, Wendy and Larry are in the top quartile undoubtedly. Maybe the top decile. They are good people. ... I have sat in teacher's conventions and went – the speaker didn't show up and people just kept sitting there (laughter). I thought, 'they are waiting for someone to hold their hand,' to say, 'you can go out into the Shaw Centre now.' I think, 'what are you waiting for? You're leaders the rest of the week?' (Individual Conversation, September 17, 2001).

When Ken and I were picking up the welded signs from the shop, he told me that that was that the most fun he had this whole year.

> Yeah, that was fun (Ken pulls out his pictures to show me the moment of picking up the signs he had captured on film.) You know how you accumulate these gifts after years and years of work from different places that you leave. You know, after we gave them out that night I thought, ... Larry made this disparaging remark about that bell that he had been given (laughter) – 'somebody take it, I don't want it.' I thought, he was just given it from his school in January and already he didn't want it. And then we give them these really corny, campy 'what would Jesus do', ugly plaques with this cheap spray paint on it and I think, 'wouldn't it be funny if these little ugly plaques survive the next twenty years with these people?' They don't ever throw them out. They say, 'this was a great week in Mitaboni. This represents a great time' (Individual Conversation, September 17, 2001).

In Mitaboni, Ken had been successful at 'finding place' and he wanted to keep that place as long as he could.

> My utter joy of getting on that plane – for which I now owe a cell phone [to the woman who works at the KLM counter in Nairobi] (laughter). ... 'I want to be with these people. These people have become my friends.' I didn't know Larry eight months ago. I barely knew Wendy and I sort of knew Dana. Among the group of us, I had only you as a friend a few months ago before this trip began. I did have the confidence to ask Dana to become involved in this writing project – mid-April. I sensed that we could do this together. I just wanted to hang out with you guys (Individual Conversation, September 17, 2001).

Being able to live out his 'story to live by' of 'finding place' has allowed Ken to live out other 'stories to live by.' Because of his new 'place' with Dana, he invited her to officially participate in his new contract to write a series of books for an education board through a Canadian publishing house. 'Finding place' allowed him to live out the story of 'offering possibilities' as well.

Ken was also able to live out his story of 'becoming' because he had found place with Wendy and with Larry. Ken described a time on a Sunday night in September when he was planning for the next day's class. He wanted to use one of the methods that Wendy had discussed in Mitaboni and he was having trouble thinking it through so he

called her. He called from Edmonton to Hamilton to discuss the implementation of a teaching method. He said it was great. He loved having a friend, a mentor (Carla's Notes, September 17, 2001).

> Well, my teaching was revolutionized in ways – some of them I think that I didn't ever do this now. I have chapter review sheets that I give out now. Especially the Grade 11's who didn't know what I was like before. Grade 12's know that this is new this year. The Grade 11's think that this was here since the beginning of time. I'm not telling them. I take credit for the whole thing. In a whole bunch of ways, I am doing things differently now from what I learned there. And I still think, Larry, you are the most amazing person to have as a roommate because you are so relaxed. Especially in a country where things don't always work perfectly, I think that you are a good person to have near. When I feel like yelling at the universe, I think, 'well, Larry's not yelling at the universe (laughter). He's okay with it' (Group Conversation, November 19, 2001).

Because of having experienced the 'stories from the borderland,' Ken's 'story to live by' of 'finding place' has shifted into new places with new colleagues and friends. And because he has not yet found place with his colleagues in his home school, he will continue to live this 'story to live by' where he is.

III. 'Living Fully' Retold

Experiencing the 'stories from the borderlands' has allowed Ken to live more deeply into his 'story to live by' of 'living fully.' In addition to the story of 'living fully' being about travelling and trying new things, 'living fully' is now about recognizing what is important when he travels and tries new things.

> I was talking to [a friend of mine] about the distinction between a tourist and a traveller. And he talks about the distinction between a tourist and a pilgrim. A tourist goes through places and a pilgrim has places go through them. ... The thought of a place actually changing you. When you spend two weeks with people who have names and classrooms and problems and strengths and joys and sorrows, it is hard for it not to go through you. I suppose you could go to Mitaboni for two weeks and come out untouched but I don't know what kind of a person that would be. It could sure make you miserable if you were going to try to not be touched (Individual Conversation, November 18, 2001).

The story of the 'Dissecting Trays' is an example of how an experience can shift 'stories to live by.' It shifts Ken's story of 'living fully' by allowing him to recognize gratitude in a new way, to be able to express life's fullness through little tangible things, and to share the fullness he has experienced with his students.

> I was telling my Grade 11 class this week about these dissecting kits. They used the ones in Grade 10 that are now in Africa. I said, 'you know the ones that you used with those orange vinyl sleeves that are all cracked. They are in a

school now in Kenya. Can you guys imagine that, a school not having those things?' It really caught their imaginations that the very same dissecting trays that they had last year are there.

Grade 11 Social Studies, the half that we just started is on diversity and disparity. So I do all these guilt-inducing things. It is not about guilt. It is about gratitude. You know, how many water taps and phone lines and televisions do you have in your house? So I told them about these dissecting kits. And then we got onto this math set. I had taken Abed this one book and he said, 'could you get me fifty more because I would like a class set?' And my students' eyes just bugged out! 'Fifty is a class set!' (Laughter). 'Yeah.' And of course we don't have a room in the school that would hold fifty by our standards. But every one of our rooms would hold fifty the way that they pack them in.

My Grade 12 students joke about this now because they know that it is just part of my teaching, especially in the Capitalism unit which we finished about three weeks ago. We were looking at Micro-Credit and we had this one exercise, which is a Stock Market simulation. You get $20,000, which you are to invest for two weeks. You can put it in mutual funds. You can put it in equity. Or, you can put it in micro-credit. Now in micro-credit, you aren't going to make anything in these two weeks. You are just going to get your principal back and you will have the joy of getting some family on its feet with this loan that you will make. Some people make about 10% on the stock market. These guys are shuffling things around every day. I even make them pay a fee for buying or selling. I want them to know that you don't make money for free. Anyway, one girl who is kind of my radical Grade 12, she said that she was going to put the whole $20,000 into this micro-credit. At the end, she had an argument with this real capitalist that we have. He put his in the stock market. And she had this argument about why he should invest in the micro-credit too. I thought, 'yeah, they know that this is part of me.' It is not that I am an old crank but it is part of me.

I asked another class, if they think that we would be able to buy a microscope to go with the dissecting trays. I asked someone about this and he said, 'don't buy a cheap one. They are hard to maintain in Canada let alone in Kenya where they don't have any parts. So you might as well get the one that costs $800.' 'Do you guys think that we could buy the $800 one?' (Individual Conversation, November 18, 2001).

The 'little tangible things' are like dissecting trays. They are also like televisions and photocopiers. 'Living fully' has shifted from just including the big adventures of travel to also including the moment by moment adventures new experiences can bring. By recognizing the fullness experiences can bring, Ken is coming to see himself in new ways.

I am always so grateful for the TV and the CD player and the Xerox machine and all the stuff that we have. I go there and you have this really unmediated experience. If you write with chalk, you write on the wall. If you want to give copies of something to somebody, you hang it on the wall and they copy it. It is all direct experience – the laundry, the dishes, the vegetables, the dirt, the

> bathroom. It is all unmediated. It is so good for me. It is so inefficient. You get about one third done in a given day but it is so good for you to get reduced to these basic elements of water, fire, air and dirt. It is good for me to go there and come back and be able to say, 'it doesn't really matter if I can't show the movie today because somebody else grabbed my TV' (Individual Conversation, September 17, 2001).

Ken's story of 'living fully' shifted in another way as well. It shifted to help Ken recognize in a new way that even when he is living fully he needs to be grounded in the familiar. He had known this prior to going to Mitaboni through literary study. Now, Ken has come to know it for himself.

> I taught *Heart of Darkness* for about nine years and so, it is not even East Africa. It is West Africa. It is a heavily quoted book that has been made into *Apocalypse Now*. And now there is another version called *Heart of Darkness*, which is very literal version of the book, 1996. Not bad. It is not a Hollywood Blockbuster sort of thing. Very slow.
>
> I do think that Conrad has shaped me. In my collection of photos of people who have shaped me is a post card I bought of Joseph Conrad at the National Portrait Gallery in London. So he is one of the twelve or fifteen people I guess who have been influential.
>
> There is a comment in the book. There is this wacky Belgian doctor who Marlow – the character, has to go to, to get checked before he is sent out with the ship to the Congo. So he goes to Antwerp to get his commission and to get his medical and so on and, this doctor is measuring his head. Marlow asks, 'how come you are measuring my head?' 'Well, there is a theory around that there are changes when you are out there.' Marlow says, 'well, I don't think that the size of my head is going to change.' The doctor says, 'no, the changes are on the inside.'
>
> Also, Conrad who was fed up with imperialism as it was being exercised at the end of the 19th century had nothing good to say about British or European Imperialism in Africa. So his portrayal of relations between whites in the Congo and so on was very negative on imperialism. This Kurtz character, who had gone out to shed the light, becomes this really bad person. It ultimately raises the question – where is the heart of darkness? Is it in Africa or is it right here? At First Baptist in Regina, Barb and George used to quote this Dostoevsky thing, 'evil runs right through the center of my own heart.' That's the sobering conclusion we come to if we are really honest. So Kurtz probably understood that in the end. ...
>
> There is this station manager in the novel in the lower station where Marlow is waiting for a ship to go up and this guy is wearing a tie and he is still dressed impeccably in white and Marlow just doesn't get this. He says something like, 'you can keep up' – a very British comment but it was a Belgian colony, 'if you can keep up the details.' And I think there is a sense where, I just want to have a salad to tell myself the world is still working as it should. But it takes so much work to find the parts of a salad in Mitaboni. I just want to keep a couple details

> in order to feel like I am hanging on here (Individual Conversation, September 17, 2001).

Keeping up with the details, making connections with the familiar in the adventure, seeing himself in new ways, noticing where the changes come from and recognizing the people who have influenced him are all new dimensions to Ken's 'story to live by' of 'living fully.'

IV. 'Understanding Difference' Retold

One of the ways Ken is in his world is he tries to understand difference and his response to it. The stories of 'The Evangelist' and 'Amsterdam' are both 'stories from the borderlands' in which Ken was able to live his 'story to live by' while in Mitaboni and to have Mitaboni shift his 'story to live by' as he returned to his home context.

By experiencing 'The Evangelist,' Ken was again confronted with stories from his background of having been raised in a conservative Christian church context.

> Probably a bigger thing for me is that, when the Kenyans sing English songs, they sing this hideous music that I was raised on. They are so bad. That was part of what I wanted to leave from my past. And then I come to these people whom I have great respect for and I can't believe it. This trash, this pulp that I was raised on. ... I have trouble not having this whole cloud of stuff come back from my upbringing. Somehow, I give them more grace to sing these songs but I am not very gracious to Canadians who still have the genre. I don't know if that is in your church but it is hard for me (Group Conversation, August 22, 2001).
>
> I still do not understand why I am willing to cut them the slack and not do so for the people in my backyard. I might understand it in a year or two years. Or maybe ten years from now, Charles will say, 'this is what we think.' Right now I don't understand. I just know that I have a double standard. [The Kenyans have] the same word, the same song, the same language and I think the same way of looking at the Bible [as that of my past]. Anyone who taught a Bible course at the end of the week might be able to say at the end of the week, 'this is what I think it is,' and they might be able to explain my dilemma. I'll cut the Kenyans slack but I won't cut the local [conservative] church slack for singing or talking the same way (Individual Conversation, September 17, 2001).

By experiencing the 'stories from the borderlands,' Ken experienced himself as living graciously towards our Kenyan colleagues, something that he does not see in himself when living in his Canadian milieu. The story of 'The Evangelist' allowed him to experience himself both as gracious and as ungracious at the same time for both the teachers and the Evangelist are Kenyan. His response to the Evangelist was even more 'ungracious' than his response to the language and song of the Kenyan teachers. This helped him to see the genuineness of the faith expression of the Kenyan teachers even though their expression was offered in language and song that Ken continues to react against. The 'stories from the borderlands' shifted Ken's 'story to live by' by helping

him see that understanding difference is even more complex than he, in his perceptive wisdom, had come to realize.

'Amsterdam' as well served as a 'story from the borderlands' that allowed Ken to shift his way of seeing himself in his world. It is as if his 'stories to live by' of 'living fully' intersect the story of 'understanding difference' in a new way, a way that brings him face to face with the parts of the world he finds revolting. When he fully lives his story of experiencing all the world has to offer, like the way he wanted to experience Amsterdam, he may encounter difference in such an overwhelming way that he wishes he had stayed away from it and that he wants to keep others from as well.

> I know that last year when I was in Amsterdam, I was there for a whole day and I went to both galleries and I just had a very rich, rich day. But I was alone so I just went back to my room at night and left the next morning. But this year, I am with friends, you guys. So we went out and I was just in tears by 11 o'clock or something. I just left Nairobi which has garbage and smell and so on and I came to Amsterdam which had more garbage and I just felt like this was the sewer of the West.
>
> I used to teach Anne Frank when I taught in Saskatchewan 25 years ago and when I see this house after this terrible evening for me of readjusting, terrible place to readjust which you had already said, I thought, 'I wonder if these people today would have the guts to stand up to the Nazis like Dutch people did in the 40's? ... Which of these two cities (Nairobi or Amsterdam) is going to survive the next two hundred years in its soul? Well, maybe Nairobi.' I thought, 'in some ways, I would rather be in Nairobi than in Amsterdam.' For all the material poverty, there is spiritual wealth. And in Amsterdam, there is material wealth post-Christian Europe and absolute spiritual poverty. And I know people think that this is just a lark, that I am not serious about this. Well, actually, if you go see whores and the sex shows – that is not a lark. That is real. Of course somehow, Jeremiah 29: 4-8 which is our church's theme verse, encourages me to pray for the welfare of this place. So that affected me and I realized how comfortable I had become in the material deprivation of Nairobi but the richness of their faith (Group Conversation, November 19, 2001).
>
> Of all the bad things I say about Mitaboni, that my kids couldn't cope and so on, I think, 'I don't want to take any young adults to Amsterdam.' That's my conclusion. When they are older, they can go there if they want to. ... So Jocelyn's (Ken's daughter) comment two years ago about these people with no material goods having some kind of a core [makes sense]. Especially Christians. They have this center (Individual Conversation, September 17, 2001).

The continuum model that Ken developed in his book (1996) regarding the range of responses we have at our disposal when we encounter difference came to life as he encountered the 'stories from the borderlands.' As described in Chapter Four, Ken's model includes the range of options from celebrating the differences that would enrich the dominant culture to annihilating the differences that are completely unacceptable to the dominant culture. Deciding that a particular kind of despicable difference needs

annihilating can be a satisfying theoretical exercise. But actually encountering an aspect of culture that fits this description, like certain aspects of Amsterdam that he found intolerable, is much more personally demanding. Because of these encounters, Ken will have personal experiences, not just intellectual examples, to share with his students when he explains his model to them. These are not just interesting observations about particular belief statements or current social trends. He now has additional places and faces with which to bring the model to life.

> Because I end up teaching about this in my ethics class, I have prepared answers. I try to push my students because there is a lot of racism in my school. I ask, 'how did race come about?' Is it part of the created order or is it part of the fall? And if it is part of the created order, then God created race and you have to celebrate it. You don't have a choice. It is just a form of diversity that God made.
>
> Now, what about language? A lot of my students are quite anti-Quebec in a kind of red neck approach. So I say, 'if you argue that language came about because of the dispersion of Babel, well that is one angle. But if you think that language diversity comes about through human creativity which is a gift given by God, then you actually have to honour linguistic diversity and you should be celebrating that. You shouldn't just tolerate Quebec. You should be celebrating the existence of these two nations, these two cultures side by side in this country.' So I look at that and I think I celebrate the existence of this other race, the linguistic diversity – I don't make too much of the Babel story. The creativity that God gave people to create language is just wonderful. I love hearing words in other languages and that kind of stuff.
>
> Ugali would probably be an example of something you tolerate. I keep thinking that, it would be a totally stupid thing to do, but if you could haul ground beef and burgers and mayo and relish and mustard and so on and make burgers for these people – have a BBQ. It would be fun. Some of them may not like burgers. Or roast sausages. Something that Germans would eat. I tolerate ugali and I didn't even do a good job of that. I kept taking smaller amounts. I kept hoping for larger amounts of soup and I eat more cabbage, which makes up for less ugali. I don't know if that schema actually works very well to analyze what goes on there because there is nothing I want to annihilate in Mitaboni.
>
> Not just whites but tourists even ex-pats together are only three or four percent of the city of Nairobi. And so here you are, a tourist, a tenth of a percent of the population. Unless you are on safari in which case you are the dominant group. [Some tourists] would probably have liked to annihilate some of the things they encounter. … There isn't anything I want to annihilate – except the evangelist. Let's unplug him and force him to talk to people face to face in a quiet voice and tell them about Christ and the changes in his life. It is a genre of speech he doesn't know I bet. He has become a caricature of himself, a bad one at that. Maybe the schema does work (Individual Conversation, September 17, 2001).

"Maybe the schema does work." Maybe Ken's schema works well theoretically and intellectually. But, maybe it works even better when the 'story to live by' shifts from 'understanding difference' to 'encountering difference.'

V. 'Offering Possibilities' Retold

Ken describes his 'story to live by' of 'offering possibilities' in this way.

> I got this word from C. S. Lewis about people 'finding their joy.' I think one of my lifelong things with both my students and my colleagues is that I just want them to find the thing they do and to get going on it. Get their life project going. Not that the people we were with didn't have it going but to encourage people in it. It gives me so much pleasure to see people do that, to see them find their joy, their place. I want to say this to some of my lost colleagues. Get moving (Individual Conversation, September 17, 2001).

Just a few days prior to our September conversation, Ken and his wife Jo-Ann, received an e-mail message from a former student of Ken's. Her message exemplified the joy and the impact that 'offering possibilities' to others can bring.

> We have a woman friend ... [she] recently baptized our friends' son Adam so she was quite excited about this. Anyway, at the end of her first year [of university studies twelve years ago], I said to her, 'would you be my prof worker (teacher assistant)?' I don't remember the conversation but she does. She wrote us a few days ago and said to Jo-Ann that she is thinking about doing her Ph.D. and some people around her have said that she should probably go to this meeting in Denver that Jo-Ann is going to because they could help her and so on. And then she wrote us this extended e-mail saying that we had this pivotal role in her life and telling me that I was smart and on and on. And I thought, 'wow, this is scary. You make about five comments over three years and people come out feeling smart and wanting to do a Ph.D.' ... I felt what a privilege to have this little place in somebody's life where you had an important role in making her feel like she could do it (Individual Conversation, September 17, 2001).

Because of our experience preparing for and being in Mitaboni together, Ken came to know Dana. 'Offering possibilities' is one of Ken's ways of being himself with other people and so it was not surprising that Ken came to offer Dana a new possibility as well. It is also one way he lives the story of 'finding place.' He invited her to participate with him and with a former student of his in his writing contract for several textbooks. His 'story to live by' did not shift away from 'offering possibilities' to others because of encountering the 'stories from the borderlands.' It did, however, shift to be in fuller focus.

> I don't know why Mitaboni has become this kind of crucible for me for this type of reflection on the teaching vocation and on life projects and on method and on curriculum and characters of schools. All this stuff that a Ph.D. in Philosophy of Ed. should have given and here I am doing it in a town where the most enterprising shop in town is God's Welding Shop or whatever it is called ... and Battery Charging! (Individual Conversation, September 17, 2001).

VI. 'Having Faces' Retold

Ken's 'stories to live by' of 'understanding difference' and of 'having faces' also intersect in a new way because of the 'stories from the borderlands.' His analysis of the ways we can respond to the differences in culture takes on a new dimension in large part because of the new faces he now has in his life. What was once simply a theoretical and philosophical schema has been brought to life because of the faces of the Kenyan teachers. "I am analyzing the whole culture but I am also faced with these 38 people who have names and faces and who are really likeable and fun to eat with and play Frisbee with and work with" (Individual Conversation, September 17, 2001). When he prepared for his ethics lessons prior to his involvement in Kenya, Ken would draw upon his past experiences of travel, like taking naps in the mid-day heat in Ecuador, or on issues as reported in the media, like the issue of hi-tech reproduction. Now that Ken has relationships with teachers in Kenya, he is able to connect an area of difference such as poverty or racism with a real situation and a real person.

It is almost as though a counter story has emerged. Its title could be that of 'understanding similarity' rather than 'understanding difference.' Having the names and faces of real people whom he has met and with whom he has lived along side for a time has created this secondary plotline. It is the same story in many ways but the telling of it begins at a different place, a place of commonality not of difference.

> I don't know what it is in Mitaboni. I went to the pool hall one day and I met all these guys. … And here is this Mama selling vegetables or fruit and here is the guy in the welding shop or the guy in the pool hall. The storekeeper – a guy who is in a whole different economy than the women who sell the fruit out behind in the market. They have names and families and wishes and hopes and responsibilities and joys and sorrows. Probably twenty times in the two weeks I thought, 'I wish others could just see this or understand this. This isn't so weird' (Individual Conversation, September 17, 2001).

Approaching his world with a schema of discovering the similarities as well as understanding the differences is a shift in Ken's 'story to live by' that came about because of the 'stories from the borderlands.' Ken has discovered the 'other' 'isn't so weird' or so different. The 'other' has many points of connection. Because of Mitaboni, Ken is able to see the faces of those who are just like him in many ways. People that are simply going about making a living, having a laugh, loving their kids, enduring hardships – about living life. The more faces he has, the more similarities he is able to see.

Dana's 'Stories to Live By' Retold

I. 'Embracing the World' Retold

Dana's 'story to live by' of 'embracing the world' was expressed in Kenya through her delight in the sights, tastes and sounds of the places we visited and as well as

of the life we lived while in Mitaboni. It is these gifts that she talks about to those who ask her about her experience in Kenya.

> The music. I talk about the incredible music. I talk about the food. There are lots of questions about the food. … 'This is what they eat on a daily basis and they love it. They salt it up and its great and that's what they have.' How much we appreciated *Haandi* (our favourite Indian restaurant). I talk about the shopping. Gerhard's (a mutual friend of ours) first question was – 'tell me what you bought.' It was good to be able to share that. Esther (Gerhard's wife) liked her bag. I said to her, 'I know this is not quite what you had described and I happen to know that Ken does have something more similar to what you wanted so we could always switch.' No, she was delighted – probably at the fact that I had remembered and brought something. It was good (Individual Conversation, September 19, 2001).

Like the Rajput miniatures from India, the tangible items she purchased while in Kenya were all connected to people – people either connected to the items themselves in having had a part in their creation or people from home who would take delight in being given it. One way that Dana lives 'embracing the world' is by making connections with people through things of beauty and craftsmanship. On the flight over to Kenya, Dana told me that Grant has always had his eyes open for a large wooden salad bowl. We were able to find the perfect one.

> Where else can you buy a giant sized wood salad bowl and bring it home and enjoy it? I am taking my artwork to be framed this weekend. There is a part of me that is curious to see the reaction of the person at the framing store when we arrive in terms of what they think of the pieces that I brought back. Whether they want to hear the story of where they came from? We had a very mediated shopping experience. We were with some experts and that was nice because we could see everything that was there. I did miss opportunities to go to the basket market although our experience on that Friday, coming back and going to that [*Village*] *Market*, I am wondering if any market would have been overwhelming after Mitaboni.
>
> I remember going to the market in Mitaboni and in one of the stalls seeing a Saskatchewan Roughrider Grey Cup T-shirt hanging there and thinking that was almost worth buying. Not that it would have fit either of us but what a sight! A little taste of home in Mitaboni. The shopping experiences were diverse and we saw a lot of the upper touristy side of the shopping. Mitaboni would be our experience of the not so touristy part.
>
> I also remember when we drove up to *Spinner's Web* and thinking that the shop itself and where it was reminded me of a friend that we made in Malaysia. Peter Ho has a shop called *Evolution* that he designs clothing for and he travels and brings back home furnishings and things to sell. Even in countries that we consider developing or third world countries, there are these little pieces of heaven where the craft is of high quality and it is on display and it is available.

> And I loved going to *Mikonos* (a women's refugee cooperative). I have had orders for oven mitts and aprons and bags. Of the things that I brought back – perhaps it is the bright colour or the usefulness in the kitchen. They have been very much things that people have said, 'the next time you go, would you mind bringing this back.' I still have some things tucked away that I will give to people over the next little while (Individual Conversation, November 22, 2001).

In the above quotation, Dana observes that much of what we did as a group in Nairobi was "mediated." Because we did not spend much time in Nairobi, we relied on those with previous knowledge of the city and those with multi-language skills to determine much of where we went and what we saw. Her prior travel experiences were certainly not like this – finding her way to the hostel in Australia, joining a local man on his scooter for a trip to his home, and camping in Ethiopia. I sense some disappointment in Dana's description of being in Nairobi. It is as if she was not able to live her 'story to live by' of 'embracing the world' in the way that she would have liked. She would have preferred to explore the city and to find the basket market without the mediating presence of others. She recognizes that the mediated experience did give her many delights and that an unmediated experience may have been too overwhelming. But she also cannot help but wonder about the 'embracing the world' moments she missed in Nairobi, 'embracing the world' moments like she did have in Mitaboni when she found the Saskatchewan Roughrider T-shirt in the market.

In our conversations together, Dana often spoke about her thorough joy in the music of the Kenyan teachers. Being totally enveloped by it and in it was truly an unmediated experience of 'embracing the world.'

> I put the video (of the Kenyan teachers' singing) in when my mother was last here. She really loves music as much as I do and she wanted to spend time listening. I couldn't fast forward through any of it. She wanted to hear it all and just loved it. Mary's [part when she sang in her low voice], 'Jesus', [is my favourite]. Just the beauty of the voices, the harmony, the way everybody knew the songs. One person would start and the rest would just follow and participate. As someone who doesn't have much of a singing voice, feeling that that really didn't matter in that environment and it was the singing that mattered and not how well or how beautiful you could do it. But just that you did. Also really enjoying the rhythm and the beat and clapping and the way that it really was worship. It was worship and prayer and celebration and adoration and all of those things offered up to God and to one another through that music. I miss that as part of my day and what I do (Individual Conversation, November 22, 2001).

Dana continues to tell the story of the music, her enjoyment of it and how it continues to resound in her spirit. She embraced all of it – the sound, the rhythm, the way it so naturally flowed from the Kenyan teachers, the way she was able to lose herself in it. Her 'story to live by' of 'embracing the world' shifted as it opened up to include this sense dimension of human expression.

Dana and her husband Grant are both wonderful cooks. They love to entertain in their home and the brunch or evening menu always contains tastes of the world they have come to know. Even so, I am having trouble imagining that ugali will ever make it into their repertoire.

> What can I say? I gained weight in Kenya. I spent the first month or so back losing what I had gained. It was the combination of wonderful food and starchy food – muthukoi and rice and ugali and chapatti and not exercising as much. I realized that if someone would put a plate of muthukoi in front of me today, I would eat it. The pineapples. The avocadoes – remember? That is a big part of the reason that I put some weight on. I haven't even tried an avocado since I came back. I look at them and I look at the price and I think, 'they just won't be the same.' Going down to the market with Ken and watching how he would negotiate and barter and pick up vegetables for salad and fruit and be able to bring that and share that around a table with friends. Chai time – the ritual of washing our hands, deciding where to sit and who to sit with, making conversation at the table, being asked why we don't eat as much as they do, why we don't salt our food like they do. All of those things stay in my mind. And, of course, *Haandi*! How can that not stay in your mind and how can you not pine to experience that food once again in that incredible atmosphere. Again, so much of food is about communion, about fellowship and so often we had the opportunity to do just that on this journey – to fellowship and commune with friends around the table and to make new friends and develop new bonds with people. It was wonderful (Individual Conversation, November 22, 2001).

All this delight, this thorough expression of joy in what Dana saw and tasted and heard, reminds me of the look on Charles' face as he held that box of dissecting trays tightly on his lap as he left Mitaboni at the end of the courses. Dana did not actually see that moment, but she has so many other moments of her own that "will stay in her mind." These are images that shift her 'story to live by' of 'embracing the world' to make it more all encompassing and more rich. Because of the 'stories from the 'borderlands,' Dana will continue to embrace her world through the fullness of all the human senses. Precious gifts, be they of items or sounds or rhythms or tastes or images, have a way of doing this.

II. 'Living in the Tensions' Retold

Some of the tensions Dana experienced before going to Kenya were augmented by being there. It was seen and felt in activities such as shopping. It was an experience of great delight, a way she embraces the world, but it also surfaced the tensions with which she lives.

> Shopping was fun. It was wonderful. It was diverse. I felt in most cases, like in *Mikonos*, that the money I was paying was going to a good cause. It was like buying at *Ten Thousand Villages* – you know that people will directly benefit. And sometimes having to pinch myself and say, 'do you realize that you just

> spent more on this one item than your Kenyan colleagues make in a month?' I spent more shopping overall than our Kenyan colleagues make in the better part of a year. To have to just put that some place and to figure out what to do with that and to have to remind myself that, by Canadian standards, it wasn't that out of line (Individual Conversation, November 22, 2001).

The description of the tension she feels in determining whether or not the amount of money she spent was excessive or not surfaces another tension as well, a tension that will result in a shift in who Dana sees herself to be. It is a tension of personhood – by whose life norms ought she to measure herself, by Kenyans' or by Canadians'? Dana has entered so fully into the Kenyans' lives that she has taken on their way of seeing the world. She has allowed her 'story to live by' to be affected by their 'stories to live by.'

This shift is visible in the way Dana describes experiencing the tension of the rich resources we have in comparison to the Kenyan teachers. This is the tension that is expressed in the story of the 'Dissecting Trays.' She told me one day over coffee that she caught herself complaining about having to push her cart around the hallways in order to get from room to room. Dana quickly caught herself and acknowledged that at least she has a cart full of resources to push around.

> And with my cart – here I am complaining about, griping about having to move my cart full of books and resources from room to room and then I find myself thinking, 'well at least I have an overhead. This room has an overhead. At least I can bring my overheads. I can teach with my overheads. And at least I have books to push from room to room.' I think I will be constantly framing or re-framing things relative to what our colleagues in Kenya would have or what they would be thinking. … The experience was amazing and the learning and the realization just how lucky we are to be in the situation we are in terms of the funding and the resources. It doesn't mean that our system can't be made better or that there isn't room for improvement or that more money isn't needed. It is all relative. But at the same time, we are so much further ahead. Often they (teachers in Canada) want to know about the resources the Kenyan teachers do have so I tell them about our visit to the teacher education center and just the lack of, and antiquity of, what is there. It just boggles the mind (Individual Conversation, September 19, 2001).

Dana as well felt and continues to feel the tension we all encountered as we stopped at the *Village Market* in Nairobi on our way back from Mitaboni and the tension we all felt in 'Amsterdam.' She connected it to other experiences in her past when she had felt similarly. It is still her 'story to live by' but the story has shifted. I see this in how Dana enters into the conversation with her friend who also visited Amsterdam this past summer. Dana reveals how she is different in her expression of curiosity as she just 'sits around the table.'

> When I was at the *Village Market*, I remember feeling the same way in India. There were times when I consciously tried not to be fazed – if that is the right

word. 'I'm not interested.' 'Get away from me.' In India I remember when I hit the people wall – the wall of being harassed. That's how it felt in the *Village Market*. I think I was just so tired and so harassed that I did not make the connection that we had just been in this wonderfully quiet place and it has been really intense and we are really tired. I knew part of it was being so tired. I just knew I wanted out of there. Wendy wanted one thing and then, 'get us out of here.' I did buy the two carvings of women and I really didn't want to – 'do I have to?' We might not see them again. This means I have to. 'Just take my money and get me out of here.'

We had run into Ken and Ken is so good with this. I had seen a mud cloth that I liked and so he starts this conversation with this guy. I wanted to say, 'Ken, I am really not interested.' He did get that message. The guy wasn't going to budge on his price anyway so we were fine to carry on our way. It was nice to get out of there.

And Amsterdam felt really cold and claustrophobic. It was a values issue. Immoral may be stretching it. My friend described it that way yesterday. They just came back from doing twelve countries in six weeks in Europe. I asked her what she thought. They loved the countryside. They cycled through the countryside and they loved all of that but she did not like Amsterdam. The immorality of people – the drinking, the everything. It was a bit like New Orleans, walking down Bourbon Street. 'Man, this is so not me.' Wondering if it would have been me twenty years ago. But looking around and thinking the majority of the people on the street were my age and older. I thought it is just not a younger thing. It is a different way of looking at what is pleasure and where do you get your enjoyment and what is fun. Maybe it is a place where people go – like teachers at teachers' convention or conferences and they have the big shindig party and they drink so much and act like idiots (Individual Conversation, September 19, 2001).

These comments of Dana's are a picture of how she navigates life 'living in the tensions.' She wrestles with issues such as lifestyle choices and personal integrity. She is sufficiently astute to realize these tensions shift over time and that time can bring to light aspects of the tensions of which she was not previously aware. Her commitment to live in the tensions combined with her 'story to live by' of 'attending closely,' also means that she is alert to the tensions in others as well. 'Stories from the borderlands' have heightened former and added new tensions to her living.

One of the new tensions is the one that was typified by 'The Evangelist.' The Christian language that the Kenyans used shifted her story of herself as one who has not tended to include spiritual expression in her way of being in the world to one who is beginning to wonder why that is and how it might be for her if she chose to be more spiritually expressive on her home landscape.

> [It] was such a natural part of how they articulated everything and it is not that way for us. It was just an awakening of my ears to hearing that kind of language. I would feel more discomfort in a community here (in Canada) with people who

> would talk in that way. I think I would take it as more of an invasion of my privacy or my space. It is so much more a reflection outward of how they live. It's not so much here and I associate that language with a much more conservative, right wing type of religion that just doesn't work for me. So I feel more uncomfortable because it is an invasion of my space or what I believe. …
>
> [This friend of mine] is much more open about talking about God and about where she is at and what she has been exploring and directions that she has been looking. Again, it is wonderful for me because it is forcing me to think about it more. … Occasionally there is a discomfort, but it is more because I am not as comfortable talking about things that I haven't processed or thought about or are really sure about or whatever. … But it seems so natural for the Kenyans. It is easier to accept it because it is part of their culture. … And even people here who do articulate it more, which I may rightly or wrongly say are more conservative people – it is not the same for me. When they do that I get really squirmy and uncomfortable. Maybe it is because with the Kenyans, it is so much a part of the air they breathe; they are not doing it because there are expectations of me. Whereas I feel that when someone uses that connotation that there is more of an expectation placed on me to agree or be the same or be as fervent or whatever. I feel that my space is invaded when I feel that expectation from them (Individual Conversation, September 19, 2001).

Living in this new tension begins, for Dana, with articulating for herself what the tension feels like. She again shifts back and forth in time. She remembers incidents in her past that caused her to feel uncomfortable. She shifts forward to comparing that discomfort with the comfort of her Kenyan friends' expression. And she shifts to the future to imagine what it might feel like to live with such ease. Dana's 'story to live by' of 'living in the tensions' has shifted to include new counterpoints of experience.

> I remember the first night that we heard the evangelist and we thought that it sounded like we were outside of a drive-in movie or that someone had a VCR and was playing a movie far too loudly. Then miraculously or magically at seven or eight o'clock in the evening, it suddenly stopped and all was quiet again. And then the next night, it started again. I remember that Ken and I took a walk down one break before the evening meal and went to see what all the noise and commotion was. We saw these two older gentlemen dressed in suits and hats and sunglasses and very, very, very loud speakers and a very choreographed presentation. Everything they did, it was like they had done it countless times before. They had all of their moves and dance movements that they would use to engage and attract a crowd or to try to get their message across, I guess. I remember that there were a few people standing around. I don't remember there being a huge crowd. The children in particular seemed to be a little bit more interested in our presence than they did in that of the evangelist. I am not sure if they would have given the evangelist their attention or not if we hadn't been there. … All of those things came into my mind. Mostly, these are the images that are staying with me. I remember the 'oh no, here we go again' feeling that we had when they would start up again in the midst of our lessons and wondering

what people were actually getting out of this (Individual Conversation, November 22, 2001).

'Living in the tensions' means that Dana often gets interrupted with that, 'oh no, here we go again' feeling. It is a feeling that alerts her to the richness the tensions can bring, even though they are sometimes hard to take, as she goes about being in her world.

Dana is still very much 'living in the tensions.' Even after being in Mitaboni, she continues to approach her world with this 'story to live by.' But it has shifted. She is able to look back on her experience in Kenya and see for herself how it has allowed her to look at herself in a new way. Her 'story to live by' of 'living in the tensions' has expanded to include and to bring together values she has tended to keep separate.

> I was going over my notes from last week and realized how little opportunity I have either to talk about education or even think about my teaching from a Christian perspective. Although that's who I am, I don't always take the time to look at the two together. It has caused me to look at this in a new way that I hope stays with me. It is easy to get back into old routines and to leave it because there is effort involved and my thinking is not integrated and to look at my classroom and my colleagues. My learning curve has gone straight up (Group Conversation, August 22, 2001).

A benefit of 'living in the tensions' is when Dana realizes that the issues or characteristics or identities that she had assumed were incompatible, can be brought together into some mutually enhancing way. Thinking about and living out education and faith need not be as dissonant as she had conceived them to be.

> I was at the most wonderful in-service last week: *Improving scores on Language Arts achievement tests*. [The presenter] actually worked with the King James Version of the Prodigal Son. I really admired him for coming to a group of public school employees and pulling out this version and justifying why he thinks this is one of the best texts to use with kids and adults. It was really neat. … Everyone got right into it. He was asking, 'what are the questions you ask before, during and after reading?' And I think that he legitimately chose it because whether you are a Christian or not, everyone probably knew it. … Or maybe it was just the ones who did know it that responded. But certainly we were all competent enough readers that by the time you read it once, you knew it. Still, I thought that it was a pretty gutsy choice (Group Conversation, November 19, 2001).

Dana is finding her way with the tension of faith expression in the public sphere. And part of her movement in this is due to the learning she encountered from the rest of us, learning that is represented in the story of the 'Welded Signs.'

> I tell people that [going to Kenya] was an amazing experience, that it was a tremendous learning experience for me. They ask, 'what were you teaching?' I go, 'well, the first course was on theological foundations' and, we had this

> conversation the last time we met – about that comfort zone of discussing that you are going with the church or that you are going with church people. Once you get past that, 'I'm okay.' 'We were there doing theological foundations.'
>
> I sat across the table from my good friend who is about as atheistic as they get. We never really talk about this. We talked about the course and the metaphors and the integration. We had a discussion whereas before I probably would not have done that.
>
> Listening to those devotions every morning was so amazing. I am not saying this because you are sitting here [Carla]. It was a real wonderful experience for me and a real learning time. To see for me, and Wendy and I talked about this, how you have so deeply integrated your faith with your teaching and how you come to approach your students. I have been reminded to do that. As I said last night, in a public school setting, it is not an excuse, but you have to be more conscious. And realizing there is no excuse because obviously there are people in the public school who are very conscious about it. Now I have to quit making excuses! Or maybe it is just some of how I view it but I have never articulated it (Individual Conversation, September 19, 2001).

Hearing Dana's comments about me is also a shift – for her and for me. By telling me of her appreciation, she brought tensions together by naming them in the immediate, not just in reflection. And, my hearing of them, shifts my 'story to live by' of 'coming to see' because both Dana and Wendy have seen who I am wanting to become. They see the little girl who wants to live with eyes wide open. And, they are seeing me as I am now – living this story in my world.

The 'stories from the borderlands' reverberate through Dana's 'story to live by' of 'living in the tensions.' The story of the 'Dissecting Trays' has shifted who Dana is in relation to things, tastes, and sounds. The story of the 'Welded Signs' has shifted how she thinks about her faith and her teaching, thinking that was initiated thorough her relationships with the other four of us. The story of 'The Evangelist' pushed her to articulate her reflections on her faith expression and to take more risks in conversations. And, the story of 'Amsterdam' shifted her knowing of herself to recognize the many shifts that have occurred over the years to bring her to hold the values she now does.

III. 'Learning Confidence' Retold

The 'Welded Signs' story reverberates through Dana's developing teacher identity as thoroughly as the choruses sung by the Kenyan teachers echo in her mind and heart. Dana describes fully the significance of being with and learning from the rest of us.

> I think one of the changes … is just because you and Ken keep going on about it – 'oh, this is going to revolutionize my teaching' (laughter). It was almost like a confidence shot and an affirmation so I feel like I am a more confident person. Maybe just in conversation with new people because I was forced to be in conversation with new people. So even now, in the staff room, just in

> conversation with other people, I am more confident. Maybe that is curiosity, being a little more willing to ask them about them. I don't know if that is quite it but I have noticed, maybe not a huge change, but a slight movement in another direction. It is a movement in the degree of confidence and affirmation in what I do. I think I really needed it. It doesn't necessarily mean that I want to change my teaching but it was a good affirmation of what I do and that what I do is valuable and that it is okay to be there and that this is maybe where I am supposed to be. And maybe if I would just get used to that and get on with my life, maybe it would be okay (Individual Conversation, September 19, 2001).

Dana's experience in Mitaboni offered her a safe context in which to explore this one of her 'stories to live by.' The story of 'learning confidence' has shifted so much that it might be renamed as 'having learned confidence, I....' Having experienced confidence, Dana has a shifted sense of who she is as a teacher, a sense that may allow her a new acceptance of her identity.

One of the places where Dana gained this sense of confidence was through the conversations we had at night in the cottage at Mitaboni.

> [They] were wonderful, a real opportunity. ... It is certainly heartening and I certainly come back to [the genuine appreciation you expressed] when I feel like I am not getting anywhere or doing anything with my students. I will confess to taking some time to really fully appreciate the genuineness of what you and Ken were saying because when I listen to your stories, Carla, from your counselling and from your experience and from Ken in the classroom, I think that I have much to learn from both of you. There are wonderful things that are being done. It is still sometimes hard for me to think that people can turn around and take what I say and find it to be just this wonderful thing and something that should be celebrated. It is good and it is encouraging. It carries me when I am not feeling appreciated or when I think that my colleagues or my students do not appreciate the things that I do. It was interesting, I was at a workshop a couple of weeks ago and the presenter was presenting on reading strategies and many, many of those strategies are things that I do with my students all of the time. But it is that whole thing of an expert is someone who is from away – whether it is outside your school or outside your district. It is somebody other than a colleague that you work with. I thought, 'maybe that is what it was for Ken and Carla' (Individual Conversation, November 22, 2001).

I know what Dana means when she comments that most of us tend to give more credence to teaching that comes from someone who is not part of our everyday worlds. This is what Dana means by an expert. This is not what I mean, nor is it what Ken means, when we talk of Dana as an expert. We mean that Dana is an expert in the sense that she has the confidence to share her knowledge with others. Her 'story to live by' of 'learning confidence' is shifting.

IV. 'Attending Closely' Retold

Like that of her story of 'embracing the world,' Dana lived her ability to see beauty throughout our Kenyan adventure together. I was alerted to this way she is in her world prior to going to Kenya when she described the beautiful colours and people that are associated and part of other cultures, other countries which she has visited. "You know, I have thought this pretty well in every country. [The women] are exquisite and their clothing is so colourful – gorgeous" (Individual Conversation, May 9, 2001).

I was not at all surprised when Dana told me that, when she shows people here at home the pictures from her summer experience, she noticed that people comment on the beautiful faces of our Kenyan friends.

> That is where we start the conversation. … [E]veryone who sees the pictures comments on the beautiful faces, the beautiful smiles. They are just so happy – they are getting their pictures taken but there is a genuineness [that is not put on for the camera]. They are wonderful people and that does come through and that is where we start the conversation. And every so often I remember to talk about the evangelist. … You would think after how annoying it was and actually going over and watching them and seeing them, I would remember. And I talk about my WWDD (Individual Conversation, September 19, 2001).

Dana notices details – details of beauty, of situation and of people. Ken and I thought that we were being so clever, sneaking around the classroom in order to get into town to pick up the welded signs before the others would begin to wonder what was taking us so long. But we did not escape Dana's attentiveness.

> I remember that I had just finished peeking out the window. I don't remember if the visitors from the committee had finished speaking or not because that was when Makenzi and the other gentleman (Titus) had come back and seeing you two scurrying out from behind the trees. 'What are they doing over there? Where are they going?' (laughter) (Individual Conversation, September 19, 2001).

Knowing this one of her 'stories to live by,' I asked Dana if there were any particular moments that she had noticed and had not yet told me about. She offered the following.

> One was actually Monday. I had gotten off the bus here at the university and I happened to be in HUB (University of Alberta campus mall). I saw two or three obviously African students and I thought, 'that looks like Abed.' It was like – oh! It was a just connection that came so quick. People that we had been with. Memories – linking them to particular people that we had met.
>
> Other moments … Some are of the excitement of dealing with colleagues here, like this friend of mine down at the Centre of Education. Before my meeting yesterday, I mentioned the need for resources and having taken those dissecting

> trays and math textbooks. And she said, 'well, call my husband. Talk to him about resources.' And then I am thinking, 'oh, logistics' (laughter).
>
> A lot of times I find when I am talking with people, they will say, 'and you went on safari, didn't you?' What I talk about is the teaching and the classroom. The safari is there but I almost feel like that was bonus. It was such a good safari and we saw so many wonderful animals and it was an incredible experience but it is almost like that is the icing on the cake. What I really want to tell people about is the course and the teaching and the people. I even feel like I met friends and want to go back. Interested to see if any of the people who said, 'I'll be writing,' actually do. Being able to say little things about people as you go through pictures. There is a picture of Ben and I that Ben wanted taken. His sister had gotten married and when I asked him how the wedding was – 'best ever' (laughter). Best ever! Little bits about them and the little insights of what is important to them. And Charles sharing about when he was four years old in response to the story Wendy read. All of those things are details that let you into their life a little more (Individual Conversation, September 19, 2001).

Dana closely attends to her world just like she did before going to Mitaboni. Similar to the way she notices details about students and situations, she continues to notice details, like seeing a student on campus who looks like Abed and being intrigued with how the safari experience is not what she tells people about first. Because of Mitaboni, of the 'stories from the borderlands,' Dana will be alert to even more details.

Dana's attentiveness was captured by the gratitude our Kenyan colleagues expressed – gratitude that for me is represented in Charles' care of the dissecting trays.

> The warmth with which we were welcomed back after two nights (away in Nairobi) was amazing. Oh man, my students have never ever been quite that excited to see me back. It's just not the same. It was wonderful to have the connection in such a short amount of time. I think that is part of their nature as people. That is what they bring to relationships – that warmth. That's what people respond to in my photos. … Maybe that is what they have. What they have is relationships. They value that. And the gratitude for the gifts we took. Trying to articulate for people just how those small gifts that we took – it was like Christmas for them. The trays, the texts, the books, the clipboards, the bags – the pride. You knew that these things were going to be well used and well taken care of (Individual Conversation, September 19, 2001).
>
> It was quite wonderful. I remember being quite excited about coming back. I remember anticipating the drive up and getting settled in and getting down to it. That was the week that Wendy, Larry and I were going to take responsibility for teaching and so there was nervous apprehension. I had been saying all along that I was ready to get at it and then suddenly, it was, 'am I ready to get at it?' 'Will I be able to do this and make myself clear?' And then we came in and we had our meal and we went down to where the students were working and they were so welcoming. Their hands were outstretched and they had smiles on their faces and they had questions for us and they wanted to share what they had been doing with

> their time while we were gone. They made us feel so welcomed and so honoured. I felt the honour that they gave us and the warmth and the friendship. I have new friends! I remember thinking, 'I can't think of any classroom that I have been in, even in the adult classrooms that I have been in, where the professors or teachers have been welcomed so warmly and been so invited in and so enjoyed by the students.' That was just a wonderful experience in that way. The warmth, the welcome, the handshakes, the embraces, the smiles – that feeling that we are glad you're back and we are glad you are here safely (Individual Conversation, November 22, 2001).

Dana's 'story to live by' of 'attending closely' provides her with an ability to live deeply. The richness with which she is able to describe and experience what it was like to be so appreciated and so welcomed is the gift her attentiveness brings. Experiencing events so deeply is how Dana is in her world. It is part of what makes her such a great teacher, especially a teacher of special education students. It is part of her 'story to live by' of 'attending closely.' "All of those things," all of the details Dana noticed while in Mitaboni, are images and memories that have reinforced Dana's way of being in the world. Having encountered the 'stories from the borderlands' has affirmed for Dana that 'attending closely' is how she wants to continue to live. It is who she will continue to be.

Larry's 'Stories to Live By' Retold

I. 'Changing the World' Retold

The story of the 'Welded Signs' is about Ken and I finding a fun way to commemorate the learning that he and I experienced with Larry, Dana and Wendy. Larry, however, wanted Ken and I to know that he too had learned from us. This learning shifted Larry's 'story to live by,' a conclusion he came to as he reflected on his teaching career. Had he been exposed to this learning earlier in his career, he believes that it would have helped him to 'change the world' as a teacher even more than he already has.

> In some respects I felt like it was a great shame for me that it was happening now when I was finished my teaching career instead of much earlier. Especially in terms of things like the calling to teach which gives teaching a very different dimension than what we get in teachers college and university here. I thought that was very significant because it is a calling and a very important one. As teachers, we do mould the next generation to a very great extent and I do know that very often we are the most positive role models that kids have. It is quite a responsibility. In terms of PD (professional development), it was excellent as well because we had to focus on what is significant in PD if we are going to teach it. There is nothing like teaching something to make you attend to it in a different way. That helped a lot because I had never paid that close attention to those topics that I taught as I did for this (Individual Conversation, September 21, 2001).

Larry was clear that the time constraints of this experience were frustrating to him. He wondered at how we could be useful to help change anything when we were there for so little time. At least we had a common language.

> At least we can communicate. I always felt that if I ever did any type of short-term mission work that it would have to be in a country that had English as the official language. Otherwise, you encounter so many barriers. You can't learn the language short term (Group Conversation, August 22, 2001).
>
> It was just so short. How much more useful we could be if we could stay awhile. I don't know how that would be in terms of recruiting people from here. They would have to be retired people I guess. When you think how much more you could get into the culture and how much more you could understand the circumstances for teachers in their schools and communities, you would be a lot more useful than flying in and flying out (Individual Conversation, September 21, 2001).

In such a short experience, Larry realized that perhaps the change that happens is more in us than any thing we could possibly offer the world. This new understanding is a shift in his 'story to live by.' Approaching the world with the desire to change it may require a sensibility to the change that first needs to happen in ourselves. The difference between traveller and tourist, Larry reflects, is to recognize this distinction (E-mail, January 7, 2002).

An added dimension to Larry's experience in Kenya was the invitation he received to consider becoming the principal of a school for a two year term. His desire to change the world combined with his frustration over the shortness of the trip led him to consider the offer very seriously. The invitation came just as we arrived.

> The first thing Gary said when we arrived in Kenya was, I have a job for you (laughter). ... I had to tell him that I just couldn't do it. I told Karanja that I would like to do it. I would like to be in both places at once. It would be fun, interesting, challenging. So I would like to be able to but I can't commit that number of years and I can't see going for less" (Individual Conversation, September 21, 2001).
>
> Karanja hit me when I was very vulnerable, as you can see, and with Gary giving me the message right off the plane, it seemed destiny reaching out of the African night. Did I tell you that Kimenyi's wife, Irene, phoned me here from the States where she was doing something? Here I was retired and thirsting for adventure and a new purpose. It seemed sort of illogical but right. It would have been very interesting to work with Karanja and other Africans and get to know what makes them tick and to experience Kenyan Africa at much greater depth (E-mail, January 7, 2002). I really felt like I was letting them down when I said, 'no' (Individual Conversation, September 21, 2001).

Larry knows that changing the world will take a long time. Short-term attempts, such as our trip to Kenya even in which the language barriers were minimized are more

about changing ourselves. Changing the world takes a long-term commitment. Larry knows: He has been at it his whole life as he has lived out his 'story to live by.'

And Larry is not finished living out this 'story to live by.' The vulnerability that Larry was feeling was in part because of his recognition that his 'stories to live by' were shifting as a result of his retirement, but they were not disappearing altogether. How he chooses to enact his 'changing the world' story is shifting because his role has changed. The story that was lived out for so long in the school context as a career teacher is shifting to include new contexts in which to live out this story. This is in large part why the opportunity to become a principal in Kenya was so appealing. This particular opportunity has not worked out but there is no question that Larry will continue to be alert to other new possibilities. The affirmation he experienced in Mitaboni, as told in the above story of Karanja and in the 'Welded Signs' story, shifted his 'story to live by' of 'changing the world' to recognize the contributions he has yet to make.

II. 'Being Alert' Retold

The litany of wonders that Larry shared with me before going to Kenya and that are quoted in chapter four was just a prelude to the number of questions, wonderments and intrigues Larry encountered while in Mitaboni. While he did find clues to the answers to some of the questions he posed before going, being in Kenya alerted him to even more questions that he had not previously asked. Just how many moments of wonder did Larry have?

> Too many to count! I hadn't travelled in a long time and was really ready to experience a new part of the world, and especially Africa. I felt like a sponge with more to absorb than I could hold or soak up in the time available. Even the avocado tree was a wonder to plumb, and those improbable birds that flew heavily over each day, and the trees imported from all over. Which were authentic African plants and birds? I wanted to know. I wanted to learn how people there related and took on their sex roles, and how all that has changed and is changing. I wanted to get into every nook and cranny of the country and see what made it go, and didn't make it go. What are the vestiges of colonialism that exist and how do they affect affairs? And how did that weird system of men working far from home come about and how can it be changed to help families? And how could I help Stephen Lewis stamp out the horrible effects of AIDS? ... There are so many of God's wonders in the world to note and process in some way to make them a part of me or me a part of them, or at least to know their effects and what they mean to life where they exist (E-mail, January 7, 2002).

My image of Larry being the weatherman of the world has grown stronger since being in Kenya and so has his 'being alert' 'story to live by.' With each new experience, Larry asks more questions, wonders more about how the world works, and sees more possibilities for his involvement.

From pointing out the preying mantis to being alert to the sound of the tree frogs, Larry enriched our time in Mitaboni by helping us all be more alert. "One thing that I have found so fascinating is the colour of the skin on their hands. I just want to hold it and look at it. It is so neat. It glows" (Group Conversation, August 22, 2001).

> That was another thing I was reflecting on from Mitaboni. I wonder how many people that we were working with have never seen many of the animals that may be outside the city. It is theirs. It is their land and their country. Do they ever get to see it? Maybe long after we do or never at all. (Group Conversation, November 19, 2001).

His attention to the world around him was not just about the unique sounds and sights he was encountering. Like the story of 'The Evangelist,' he was also attentive to the uniqueness he was encountering in our Kenyan colleagues' expression of faith. Wondering if this would be genuine or not was one of the many questions Larry had articulated prior to going to Kenya: "How much of their obvious religiosity is genuine?" (Individual Conversation, May 10, 2001).

> I actually wondered [about that] at times while we there and have since. I know that everybody in a situation like that is trying to put their best foot forward and is putting their best act on things. Yet, at the same time, I had a really strong sense of feeling that they were genuine in what they were doing and saying. And that their feeling for the children and their expression of faith was part of them. It was not something put on for the foreigners. ... I was quite impressed with their evidence of faith and their concern for their kids (Individual Conversation, September 21, 2001).
>
> Spirituality was at the center of it in one way or another. With you folks teaching the first week with that emphasis [on theological foundations], it removed any barriers we had of talking about our faith or expressing it. The first week you had led and they followed your model. We had the relationships. And we reached out to their spirituality when we asked about their songs and we enjoyed them and joined in with them and showed obvious appreciation for what they were doing. That encouraged it very much. Had we been stiff in any way, it would have been different (Individual Conversation, September 21, 2001).

Larry lives out his 'story to live by' of 'being alert' in every dimension of life. From noticing the uniqueness of a colour or an animal to trying to figure out complex interactions, Larry lives 'being alert.' The shifts in this 'story to live by' that have occurred because of having been in Mitaboni are shifts of expansion. The 'stories from the borderlands' have given Larry a bigger world to which he can be alert.

III. 'Being Curious' Retold

For Larry, there was little judgment about the cultural differences he encountered. He entered into the experience in Mitaboni with his 'being curious' 'story to live by' in full gear. It is a 'story to live by' that allows Larry to enter his world for the sake of

discovering what is there. Unlike his 'story to live by' of 'changing the world,' this 'story to live by' allows him in part to see the differences he encounters as just a reality to discover rather than one to change or evaluate. And he came out of the experience in Mitaboni with the story of 'being curious' in full focus.

> It is just fascinating. It really is. ... I felt that I was very focused personally about the differences and trying to sort out the differences and trying to understand. Asking about them. I asked loads of questions of people and about the flora and fauna and everything else in their culture and I felt it was all useful. ... I suppose that I might get to some aspects that are dangerous or harmful for people. They need to be changed. But I find cultural difference really interesting and something to be celebrated and enjoyed. Very often too, the longer I spend with a culture and the deeper the understanding gets, some of the things initially that should be changed actually function pretty well. You have to get it in context and understand it for what it is. And in some cases, you just have to accept it for what it is because it is not going to change. It may not be very good in our estimation but it might not be able to be changed either. Get used to it. You have to live with it if you are going to be there (Individual Conversation, September 21, 2001).

Larry's 'stories to live by' of 'being curious' and 'helping others' intersected in a unique way in Mitaboni. It was as though Larry's curiosity kept our desire to help as much as we could in the forefront of all of our experiences.

> We were trying to do as much as we could and really hoping that we were connecting. So in our reflective time in the evenings, we were deep into that. How did we do? Did we do a good job? Are our ideas useful? On the last day that we were there and I was teaching on my own and you guys were marking, I asked them two or three times, 'is this helpful? Is this useful?' And they were very adamant, 'yes, it is.' At the same time, I thought, 'how on earth can they possibly take this and apply it in the classroom?' I asked Charles about what his classroom is like and he said, 'I just have a little bit of room at the front for myself. The rest is full of desks. It's a chalkboard and a piece of chalk.' Even at teachers' college, his professors were doing science experiments orally with no equipment. The teachers weren't doing it. The professors were telling them about it. I thought, 'how can they take anything that we are giving them and use it? How can we bridge that gap so that we can give them stuff that is useful? ... How much of what we did help? And what other things could we have done instead? Where are their greatest needs?' (Individual Conversation, September 21, 2001).

Larry recognized that the dissecting trays were like a symbol of the contribution he hoped he could make. But, his curiosity constantly alerted him to the inadequacy of the ways we had chosen to help (i.e. just a short three week trip rather than the long-term, just offering dissecting trays when they need so much more, etc.) and to new possibilities of helping. Having lived his 'story to live by' of 'being curious' in Mitaboni, Larry

encountered a tension in, perhaps not a new but certainly a more profound, way. Larry's story of 'being curious' alerted him to ways he can live his 'story to live by' of 'helping others' more profoundly and urgently. This intersection of his 'stories to live by' is interesting to see by exploring further the shifts in his story of 'helping others.'

IV. 'Helping Others' Retold

The dissecting trays were one tangible way we were able to help one teacher in one school community. But Larry wishes that he could do more, like give a gift or two to Samuel as well.

> I am so thankful that you gave us that sheet with everybody's faces and names on it. When you take photographs, you may get everybody and you may not. Obviously we didn't so it is really nice to have that. I wish that I had time to get to know all of them as well as I did some of them. I still wonder what their lives are really like. I would like to send Samuel a jacket. He was in the first group that I had and the collar of the jacket was so frayed. And then some how or other he told me that he had actually ridden on a motorcycle once and he really wanted to have one. And I thought, 'oh, I don't think that he will ever get one.' Being on the salaries they are, he will never own a motorbike (Group Conversation, November 19, 2001).

Larry's 'stories to live by' of 'being curious' and 'helping others' intersect. Because he lived his curiosity, he discovered ways in which he could live his helpfulness: Because he was curious enough to get to know Samuel, he discovered some of Samuel's dreams that Larry now desires to participate in coming to fruition. However, Larry was confronted with the reality he is not able, for many reasons, to help in the way he desires to. And, even if Larry was able to help Samuel in the way Samuel desires, it may not be the best kind of help either for Samuel or for Larry. Living both of these 'stories to live by' at the same time, shifted Larry's insight into the complexity of his world.

Larry greatly appreciated the welded sign that Ken and I had made for him because he recognizes the learning that he gained. Even in his being helped, he wanted to help others. We were rather curious about this because Larry had brought with him from Canada the eight inch school bell that he had received from his school district as a retirement gift. He brought it and was prepared to give it away to one of the Kenyan teachers who might want to use it, a way of living his 'story to live by.'

> The bell – I did not want to receive it because I felt shafted by this county and it was just something they send everyone anyway. No feeling in it at all. The WWLD was so quirky that I loved it, and although I don't think I deserve any special consideration for what I did, I enjoyed receiving it anyway. I will be keeping it (E-mail, January 7, 2002).
>
> I think the thing I keep coming back to is how great the people were that we worked with, how committed they were and how hard they work under such circumstances. And how they, to all appearances at any rate, seem to hang in

> there very well and don't give up. I really learned a lot from the rest of you as well. Something that I felt that was very significant is that we could have gotten into some really bad circumstances. ... The opportunity for professional jealousy amongst ourselves could have been very significant. I kind of took it for granted until I got home and thought about it. 'Gee, you know, we were really lucky.' God was with us on that one too (Individual Conversation, September 21, 2001).

Having the ones who have been helped by Larry express their gratitude in such a profound way was a new experience for Larry. It is a shift in his 'story to live by' that both catches him off guard and creates a deeper humility.

> I am just so grateful to God that we could be there and do that and have that experience. It was so neat. And their gratitude I found overwhelming because I felt that because their circumstances are so difficult it seemed like we were doing so little in comparison to what they have to do. We could fly out of that and they would be there for the rest of their lives in that difficult situation. I think we tend to have an attitude that their students are much more compliant than ours. That this isn't a big issue for them. But I think of Brian Stelck's mother [a woman who is familiar with education in Kenya] saying to me at our church, 'they lose four or five kids a year due to caning.' If the kids are compliant and well behaved, what is that about? It made me think, which is another reason why I would love to spend some time there and get to know their classroom situation, that it made me think that their teaching assignments may be a whole lot harder than I first surmised. I found their gratitude overwhelming because I felt like I didn't deserve it a whole lot. I guess I felt like I was gaining so much by going there and the whole experience was so unique. Their gratitude was almost too much to bear because they were so grateful and yet their circumstances are a whole lot worse than ours in every respect (Individual Conversation, September 21, 2001).

Larry has been very comfortable living his 'story to live by' of 'helping others' over the years. He is much more familiar with this 'story to live by' than he is with the 'story to live by' of 'being helped.' Experiencing the 'stories from the borderlands' allowed this new subplot to emerge.

Wendy's 'Stories to Live By' Retold

I. 'Loving Literature' Retold

Reverberations from the 'stories from the borderlands' ring through Wendy's 'story to live by' of 'loving literature.' She did not bring dissecting trays with her to Kenya, but the tangible material items she did decide to bring were books. Wendy spent time contacting friends of hers who work in publishing houses to donate books that she could bring and give to the Kenyan teachers. These friends who are part of her professional networks, gave enough books to fill two suitcases. I went to her home a few days before we left for Kenya to sort through them and to get them packed for the

journey. Dana was there that night as well and, as the three of us looked through each book, making decisions as to its suitability for the Kenyan context, Wendy lived her story. I could tell that she loved those books and that she loved the joy that her colleagues displayed when they gave them to her. She would take a book, tell us a little about the author and the illustrator, and recall a story of when a particular student read the book or when she or a colleague used the book in a classroom context. And then she would think about the book in a new way. She tried to imagine how Kenyan colleagues and students might respond to its content, its pictures, and its story. Ken brought dissecting trays but Wendy brought books.

In addition to bringing books to give away, Wendy brought several of her favourite stories. Our appreciation of her bringing who she is, bringing this 'story to live by,' is part of what prompted us to celebrate her with the gift of the welded sign. She went to Kenya not knowing if or how or when the books might fit into the course curriculum but she wanted to have them there hoping that they might be useful and knowing that they were part of what she hoped to be able to share with the Kenyan teachers.

During one lesson, she used a story called *Shells*.

> [I used it] to talk about how we teach narrative texts and how it is important to make life connections, and how when we are reading stories, we bring ourselves to them, and how it can make us think about something that has happened in our own life or help us think about other stories we have either read or heard. They can also connect us to more global things – what is happening in the world and world issues.
>
> Charles had a very personal response to the story that was kind of heart wrenching. In the story, the main character had lost his parents and was living with an Aunt who was very different from his family. This was a very difficult thing for the boy because of losing his parents but also because of being so young. Charles remembered that when he was very young – four or five, he had relatives that his parents wanted him to go and stay with so that he would be at a better school. In the story and in Charles life, the Aunt was very sharp-tongued and difficult to be with and sort of brought out those more negative qualities in Charles himself. It was a very hard memory for Charles because it made him think back to that hard time in his life. He did not say more than that in the class but I asked him more about it later. Charles didn't have to end up staying with that Aunt. He did go back to his own family. But it made me wonder how he turned out to be such a wonderful, gentle, thoughtful, soft-spoken man given the environment he grew up in. It was short lived – only weeks or months – he didn't tell us that at the time. It was neat to have such a personal response like that in a public forum because it was a difficult story for him to tell. He was very emotional about it but I so appreciated his sharing his own response to the story. Again, it reinforces for me just how we need to help students make these connections. When we read things, we are not divorced from them, but just to make those personal connections (Individual Conversation, January 22, 2002).

Wendy loves literature because it is through literature that she knows who she is. She is able to make personal connections that help her think about her life, inform how she lives in her world, and name the joys and pains she too has experienced. She did this with Dana and I as we packed up the donated books. And, she facilitated this for Charles in the class through the presentation of the story entitled *Shells*. Reading, telling, discussing and responding to stories is one way through which Wendy is able to understand her world and who she is in it. Because of this, Wendy lives and teaches her 'story to live by' of 'loving literature' wherever she is, in basements or in classrooms.

Charles brought his 'stories to live by' with him to Mitaboni and he took them and the dissecting trays back with him. Wendy brought her stories to Mitaboni as well and she brought stories home.

> I am working with Grade Two's right now in school and one of their social studies strands is looking at traditions and cultures. And to piggy back on what the teachers are doing in the classroom, I have decided in my library time with them to do an around the world tour looking at the literatures of the different continents. Because I do have artifacts from different African places, namely Kenya and Ethiopia, when we get to Africa, I will stop there. I have stories from Kenya and I have things to show them. When I was doing the story, *The Name of the Tree*, which is a Bantu tale, I had the wooden animals I had bought at the Nairobi airport. Many of those animals are in the story so I was able to pass them around. Some of what I do is because of the places that I have visited – those countries and those memories (Individual Conversation, January 22, 2002). I continue to see how our two weeks working together has given new life to my days with students (E-mail, September 16, 2001).

One of the ways Wendy is experiencing 'new life' in her days with students is by being able to make even more 'personal connections,' connections between her experiences in Kenya and sharing those experiences with her students. It is a story that she lived while she was in Kenya – shopping with literature such as the Bantu tale in mind. As she thinks about her current students, she desires to facilitate the possibility of making a personal connection of some kind, using her experiences to facilitate a connection either with her directly or with some other aspect of the students' world. A shift in Wendy's 'loving literature' story to live by is a shift towards living it more fully and vividly with her students in Canada.

In the fall, after returning from Kenya, Wendy's book club was reading a book entitled *Kafir Boy,* which is set in Apartheid South Africa. It chronicles the boy's whole life year by year.

> The little boy has to actually be bound hand and foot and dragged to school because he has heard such horror stories about what school is like. There are many scenes with caning in it. I thought, 'I wonder to what degree does caning actually still happen in the schools in Kenya' and how wonderful it is that the

> Kenyan teachers we met have been able to say, 'we can't do this anymore' and they are trying to look for other ways.
>
> [There is this scene] when the principal closed the door because he didn't want the boy to run away when he went to unbind him. And there were all of these canes hanging behind his door. And I had pictures of a torture chamber rather than something that was going to instill respect and self-discipline. I remembered when we were debating intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in one of the class sessions. I was thinking that it is really interesting to read about a situation and what I hoped was not the practice in Kenya. It was pretty awful (Individual Conversation, October 13, 2001).

Because Wendy has been to Kenya and has experienced the 'stories from the borderlands,' she is able to consider that the situation described in the memoir just may indeed be fiction. She now knows Charles and Lenah and Musyoki and the other Kenyan teachers, and she cannot imagine any one of them dealing with students in the way some teachers in the book may have done. 'Loving literature' and experiencing Kenya will continue to intersect and to instigate further wonderings and fuller reflections.

Wendy's story of Charles is the same Charles who received the dissecting trays from Ken and is the same Charles who, in his letter, referred to the significant learning that he received from Wendy. The story of the 'Welded Signs', the story that celebrates this learning, rings through items and relationships and makes connections with and affirmations from Wendy's love of literature. Because of experiencing Mitaboni, the 'stories from the borderlands,' Wendy's 'story to live by' of 'loving literature' has been affirmed and enriched as one of the ways she is in her world.

II. 'Creating Professional Networks' Retold

'Welded Signs' and 'The Evangelist' are the 'stories from the borderlands' that I can see being threaded through this one of Wendy's 'stories to live by.' The emphasis she has come to place on professional learning and on professional relationships is made even richer as she affirms the importance of creating professional networks – something that was key for her in Mitaboni and will continue to be a priority for her in her home school context. These 'stories from the borderlands' have reinforced her 'story to live by' of 'creating professional networks.' They will continue to be the way she comes to know her world.

When she tells people about her summer experience, she says the following.

> The elevator version, the version you could tell in a short elevator ride, is – it was full. It was worthwhile. I feel like I probably had an opportunity to learn and grow more than the Kenyan teachers did in some ways. And that it was fun to be in a small community with people who are committed teachers and that it was fun to have that collegiality and it was nice to go some place else (Individual Conversation, October 13, 2001).

Even the 'elevator version' telling of her summer in Kenya is about collegiality. The learning she received from the other Canadians and the Kenyans reinforced her 'story to live by' of 'creating professional networks.'

But there is more than an 'elevator version.' Like the wonderings that were sparked by the presence of the evangelist, there are continued wonderings about the significant difference the presence of relationships makes in our ability to learn from one another and our ability to encounter someone as genuine. 'The Evangelist' story helped us to think about this. We each felt that we could question more with, explore more with, share more with, risk more with and be valued more by one another – the Canadian and Kenyan teachers, than we ever could with or by the evangelist. We explored the many reasons for this but came to understand that the main reason was because we did not have a relationship with the evangelist. We did with one another. We did not spend time with the evangelist but we did with one another.

Wendy understands that the difference relationship makes affects her learning at home as well.

> There have been times when I have gone to a conference and I have been one of 200 or 1000 people and there have been inspiring things. But there is something about sharing a similar story whether that is of faith or friendship or learning. If you have relationship, if you have someone who has been along side you and experienced the same thing, just how much richer that is. This past couple of years I have gone to conferences but I have not been amongst people that I have known. It is harder then to go back to your school and share it because they are missing the context of the day.
>
> This past week, I have been in Ancaster for the full week. I was with twenty other people and the week allowed me to get to know them and develop relationships. I know that I will be seeing them again at the end of November. There are people that I want to ask things about. All of us are having to give this first workshop to our staff on October 19 and so there are certain people that I want to seek out and find out how that went for them. I think maybe that it has something to do with relationships.
>
> At Mitaboni, it was certainly based in friendship and teaching style and beliefs about learning and there are people in my school that I share a lot with too because we come at things from a similar angle. I respect their opinions and they respect mine. So there is a mutual learning that can happen. In most things in our life, the community context has a lot to do with what we take out of it. Meta-cognition is one of those old, old words but being able to think about our thinking and being able to do that in a learning community is much more powerful than doing that in isolation (Individual Conversation, October 13, 2001).

Because Wendy approaches her world with her 'story to live by' of 'creating professional relationships,' Wendy cannot conceive of the possibility that there may have been some in that group of twenty colleagues that do not consider professional relationships as being important. She does not entertain the possibility that for some of

those people, they may have chosen not even to learn one another's names. She enters into life expecting to create community and this way of being in her world has been strengthened by having lived the 'stories of the borderlands.' Relationships, time, community – these are what Wendy considered important before going to Kenya and what have been affirmed since returning to her home landscape.

The story of Wendy's colleague, Les, is illustrative of this. Wendy had told us about Les while we were in Mitaboni and chooses to retell her story about him after returning home. It is as if, through having been affirmed by the significant contribution of learning she influenced in the other four of us, she has been alerted to the significance of who she is in Les' story. She has become more awake to the learning he has done professionally, learning that has been sparked because of his relationship with her over time in their school community.

> Les is a person who used to be an-out-the-door-at-3:15 kind of person. He was feeling quite discouraged with his profession and I think was on the verge of either taking a leave of absence or doing something else. I don't think that I have been saying a lot of new things over the years but what may have happened was, when you hear things enough times, you finally make connections and can make room for new learning. You can't just hear something once and say, 'this is fantastic.' You have to have categories set up so that you can see their validity. Because of this Learning Opportunities Grant, the LOG grant, we were able to do some in-services and conferences and Les has finally been reading some of the books that I have been shoving at him for three years. He is so excited that he practically dances to work everyday. Two or three times a day he will come up to the library and tug on my sleeve and tell me about the last thing that he tried and it has been working. It has been so exciting to see somebody rejuvenated and trying new things. He says that his kids are farther ahead now in October than sometimes they were by June. It is simply because – well, a lot of it is that pre-teaching that he is doing, a lot of things in a very slow and methodical and up-front way and trying new things that are really successful. That has been so fun to see him really excited and to really feel a different atmosphere in his class (Individual Conversation, October 13, 2001).

I wonder how Wendy tells the story of Ken and his excitement about his learning to the colleagues at her school because, in many ways, Les' story and Ken's story are parallel stories. I wonder how many more stories Wendy has of colleagues whose teaching lives have found rejuvenation because of the professional relationship she has forged with them.

Gary and I were at Daniel and Wendy's for dinner one evening in late October (2001) and Wendy told me about a sign that she had noticed in the main office of her school just a few days previous. She told me that she could not control her laughter and delight when she saw it. Les was obviously sharing his exuberance with more people than just Wendy. Sitting on the desk beside the vice-principal's door was a sign that could be quickly hung on the door when needed. It reads, "Not now, Les."

Affirming relationships over time and through community has brought increased enthusiasm to the learning communities and professional networks in Wendy's life since being in Mitaboni.

> In September I felt very enthusiastic about bringing back some of my colleagues' ideas – particularly when Dana and I were doing some work with the organizational strategies and the graphic organizers and such. Just feeling again that that is something I need to bring to the fore as much as possible even though they have been a part of it in the past. And just other things – that whole enthusiasm for personal and professional growth seemed to be very close to what I was doing. I always felt that it was important to grow as a professional and to have opportunity to talk and share with colleagues (Individual Conversation, January 22, 2002).

Because of having lived the 'stories from the borderlands,' Wendy's 'story to live by' of 'creating professional networks' has expanded into a new dimension for her.

> I hadn't really thought about this before but that this time in Mitaboni would be giving the Kenyan teachers a network and that they would be developing friendships this week as well. That has been really interesting to watch and fun. And you, Carla, would have had a sense of that because some of them had been here for the focus group but it is one thing that I hadn't really thought about that is nice. It is so good to think that they have colleagues that have experienced the same thing they have and shared that together (Group Conversation, August 22, 2001).

Wendy's 'story to live by' of 'creating professional networks' shifted to recognize her part in facilitating an opportunity to create professional networks amongst the Kenyan teachers, even if they were not with her. Seeing her story at work and witnessing the richness it was bringing to others shifted the scope of her 'story to live by' so as to include a new dimension – that of helping others create their own professional networks.

III. 'Always Learning' Retold

"I wanted to send you Tony Stead's motto: 'When a teacher ceases to be a learner, a teacher ceases to be a teacher.' Isn't this a great way to think about professional development?" (E-mail, January 26, 2002). Wendy's 'story to live by' of 'always learning' is certainly about professional development in the formal sense, but it is also about the learning she finds herself doing by simply going about her life as well. Her connection with the motto is an affirmation of her identity, of her 'story to live by.'

> I think teaching is a different kind of profession. I think there are lots of professions that you can close the door at the end of the day and you stop being whatever that is. I find I am always a teacher. It doesn't matter if I am on summer holidays or the weekend or whether I am out. I always see things

> through a teacher's eyes. I feel like teaching is so eclectic, you are always looking for new things. You are always looking for new ideas. I get ideas in the strangest places … and maybe that is a bad thing. I can't turn off being a teacher. On the other hand, it is positive. It is one of those professions that you just don't leave behind. I know other people who, when it is the weekend, they are somebody else. I don't find that (Individual Conversation, October 13, 2001).

Wendy cannot not be a teacher because Wendy is 'always learning' and 'always learning' is who a teacher is. Being a teacher and being one who is learning are one in the same for Wendy. It is who she is in her world.

One example of 'always learning' for Wendy was the thinking she has done about the themes evident in the stories of 'The Evangelist' and 'Amsterdam.'

> We had talked earlier about the secular and sacred divide. I guess I had never really thought about Canada as being as secular as it is. Because of multiculturalism in addition to religion taking a back seat, I live and work in a secular world.
>
> I got to Kenya and it is a spiritual world. And this is not just because we were with Christian [teachers]. One of the things I think about is even in the everyday language, it is there. They are conscious of the spirit. I can't think of a Kenyan example but in Amharic, when you say 'How are you?' you answer, 'Thanks be to God.' That is the response. You don't have to be a Christian to say that. It is inherent in their language and their way of thinking and that is not part of the world I live in.
>
> I often feel divided about trying to explain my motivation for doing something. I was heavily involved in trying to get this parent newsletter off the ground last year where we were trying to get some literacy information home. I was doing that on a monthly basis and we were having a contest winning gift certificates to *Chapters* for parents who actually read the literacy article. My principal said, 'oh Wendy, you are just a missionary.' He meant that in terms of literacy. But I just thought, 'oh, what an odd thing to say.' Maybe I am. That's the thing about always being a teacher. That's a part of who I am even though I sometimes think that teaching and I are not the greatest match. But anyway, here we are 25 years later.
>
> The sacred and the secular divide, I really found most apparent in quieter ways when we were in Kenya. And then, of course, Amsterdam was quite the shock. Maybe some of that was just being in the red light district. But it was more than that. It was just seeing people in the street. I found it so jarring. I had been in big crowded cities before and, of course, Nairobi is big and crowded, but it somehow came up and slapped me in the face and I thought, 'it is going to be a big leap to go back home again' (Individual Conversation, October 13, 2001).

Wendy's approach to life as 'always learning' is so passionate that she has been called 'a missionary.' It is so risky, as illustrated by her response to Amsterdam, that she finds herself having to face lessons she may not like. But her commitment speaks

volumes – 25 years worth of volumes of being and of learning, of teaching. 'Stories from the borderlands' push her 'stories to live by' to include new aspects of her world wherever they many be found.

IV. 'Celebrating Friendships' Retold

The 'Welded Signs' story is as much about friendship as it is about learning. The signs symbolized what Wendy wrote in one of her e-mails when she heard that the other four of us would be getting together in Edmonton.

> What luck. The four of you getting to see each other this week. I wish I could be there. ... I have good memories to carry around with me – good fun, inspiring colleagues, warm community, challenge, *Haandi*, safari, and friendship. Thanks, one and all (E-mail, September 16, 2001).

The story of the 'Dissecting Trays,' in its attention to the impoverished state of the facilities at some of the schools, was not the aspect that connected for Wendy. It was more of the 'who' the Kenyan teachers are as people and professionals who care about doing the best job they possibly can for their schools and their students with the resources they have. It was about the expression and celebration of friendship.

> What was missing for me was the opportunity to get into their classes and really see them in action. I would have loved that. I know that they don't have resources but they are resourceful people. Just like it was wonderful to see my Canadian colleagues in action, I would like to see how the Kenyans actually do it.
>
> It wasn't a shock for me to see the lack of resources. I did come back and I am grateful for all the books in my library and all of that but because I expected not to see that there, it wasn't a major feeling. I felt grateful just to be able to go and be a part of it. Not so much that I feel that I contributed a whole lot but just to be able to go and be part of it. I didn't go feeling like I have a lot to give and a lot to offer. I have been teaching a long time and I know I have lots of things that I can give. But that is not the sense that I went with. It was just wonderful to go and be part of the whole experience and to feel like I was one of them and that I wasn't coming in and being the expert.
>
> I liked the group work. It was nice to sit and be part of them and work along side them. I came home with a very grateful heart for three wonderful weeks and being able to hang out with four wonderful people and to be some place else and appreciate somebody else's life and what gives meaning in life to someone in another context.
>
> So it's the people who resonate – Juliana, and Kiamba because he taught English and wanted to do more literature – a kindred spirit there, the sense of fun with Mary and Lenah. Lenah was in my group twice. What a wonderful woman she is. I thought those kids must just be so blessed to have those people. And with Musyoki – he has such a big warm heart that he is almost like a primary kid in an adult's body and I thought, 'little kids must absolutely love him because he can be with them and not expect them to be something that they are not.' I guess

> I was just really glad to be able to look at these (pictures) and think about people. They are not just a bunch of faces on this photo sheet. I can look back and know a little bit about all of them and others to a greater degree. Again, just glad for the opportunity to meet wonderful people and I always feel blessed by people in my life. There are good wonderful people everywhere. It doesn't matter where you are from (Individual Conversation, October 13, 2001).

It is as if Wendy did not get enough of our Kenyan colleagues. She knows that if she could see them in their context, teaching with their students and interacting with their colleagues, she would have the opportunity to go even deeper in her friendships with them. She would see their resourcefulness at work and she would be able to appreciate them even more for it. I hear a hint of envy in her words. Wendy is envious of the students who get to be in relationship with her Kenyan teacher friends day by day. She would love to be right with them in their school contexts.

Even when she thinks about the jarring impact of being in Amsterdam on the way home, Wendy focuses in on the gifts of friendships that she has been given in the past and the gifts from the summer. As she so clearly states in the following excerpt, she is always more comfortable in the place where she has friends for it is there that she can be who she is.

> We were very aware and it was very poignant that Amsterdam was such a secular place and that Kenya seemed to be very alive in a spiritual sense still. It was part of their every day thinking and language so that there was still a sense of the sacred being preserved in their culture.... I think we all felt comfortable being with the Kenyans and just living life with them even though we were aware that we were outsiders and this was not our place but they accepted us and we felt comfortable with them. And I think we felt the sharp contrast when we went to Amsterdam. We were more comfortable with the way they lived in Kenya. We were more comfortable in the place where we have friends. ... People from Canada are really fortunate to be able to spend time with these people because they were all so wonderful (Individual Conversation, January 22, 2002).

Wendy received a letter of her own. It was from Benson, not from Charles. It celebrates the friendship between he and Wendy, a friendship in which the sharing of ideas and the discussion of teaching strategies is entwined with the news of the landscape and the anticipation of being together. Wendy received this letter in December 2001 after Benson had completed two more courses in the program. Wendy was not part of the December teaching team and Benson was disappointed that she had not been there.

> Dear Wendy:
>
> I am fine and hope so for you. By now I am just relaxing at home after completing the December courses. What happened? I very much wanted to listen to your talks, only to find that you were no where to be found.
>
> This is to thank you especially for the hints you gave us during the August courses. My students have benefited from it. They have now done their National

> exams and as we celebrate the Merry Christmas, we still wait for their results. I know they will make it since they enjoyed the lessons especially when I employed your instructional strategies: story telling, inquiry method, story map like the one you gave me (about bears), the T charts, etc.
>
> Its now winter season here in Kenya. The rains are all over. Crops are doing well and everything is green. The environment is quite attractive and that is why I wish you had come.
>
> Surely Wendy, I have nothing to reward you for all you did. I know God will reward you in a mighty way (Colossians 3:1-5). I really miss your lecture. I hope you will make an effort of coming back again. …
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Benson
>
> (Printed with Benson's permission.)

For Wendy, resources like the dissecting trays, the books and the ideas are not just items. They are expressions of the people who have them. They are gifts of friendship by the people who give them. It is through friendship that the disparity of material goods dwindles. It is through friendship that Wendy is able to see what she values – the incredible resourcefulness of amazing people.

> Receiving the letter from Benson and hearing that he did have a job when I had heard earlier that he didn't, [I was] thankful for that. That reminded me of all the disparity between there and here. I think of all the resources you could get that would be wonderful because they don't have them. Recognizing differences – we grow accustomed to what we have in terms of resources and facility and personnel and what little they have to work with and what a wonderful job they do in spite of all that (Individual Conversation, January 22, 2002).

Prior to going to Kenya, Wendy had told me about Negussie, the childhood friend of Daniel's from Ethiopia who died during their trip to Africa in 1993. He had become ill while attending Scott Theological College, a seminary in Kenya that, Wendy did not know, is located along the road we travelled to get to Mitaboni.

> The first time we passed it, it took me by surprise. I knew [the college] was in Kenya but I had not anticipated that it would be along the Machakos road and all of a sudden there it was. … That is where he spent his last days before he got sick and returned to Ethiopia where he had such a bright future ahead of him and where that was just truncated and it seemed like such a senseless, useless death after all of the things that he had been through – through the revolutionary years and being in prison and tortured and building Bible Studies and things like that within the prison. And just how the church was looking forward to him being one of their significant leaders for the country and not just in the city of Addis. We were not able to see very much from the gates [as we passed by] but just his story and what a significant person he was in [Daniel's] life made me sort of feel like – not that his presence was there – but this is one of the last places that he was on this earth (Individual Conversation, January 22, 2002).

I remember asking Wendy if she would like us to drive into the college's compound, to maybe stop for a minute. She declined my suggestion and, when I think about it now, I am not surprised that she did. It is the friendship of Negussie that she celebrates, not his connection to the college. Wendy continues to live an even stronger 'story to live by' of 'celebrating friendships' because of her experience in Kenya.

Carla's 'Stories to Live By' Retold

I. 'Grounded in People, Place and Past' Retold

I was at a workshop for teachers a couple of weeks ago and the leader asked if I would facilitate the class discussion on a topic that he knew I had spent some time thinking about. I could not believe it! I don't mean that I could not believe that he asked me to take the class. I mean, I could not believe that my first thoughts in response to his request were, 'what would Wendy do?' and 'what would Dana do?' and 'what would Larry do?' and 'what would Ken do?' There I was, with an hour to prepare, thinking to myself, 'which of the strategies that I learned in Mitaboni would be best to help these teachers grasp what I wanted to teach?'

My 'story to live by' of being 'grounded in people, place and past' made explicit my identity's rootedness in my family relationships, the landscape of the prairies, and our extended and recent family history. Experiences such as the summer in Kenya have not changed this – I am still rooted there. This is still one of my 'stories to live by.' But, through experiencing other people and other places, they become part of my past that adds to how I am in my world. The people – Ken, Dana, Larry and Wendy, as well as the Kenyan teachers and the place of Mitaboni, are part of my past experience that now, like my family and the prairies, inform my present.

When he phones, he just says, 'Ken here.' Or when I send him an e-mail, he'll reply with just one or two words. It is as though he assumes I am right there. I love how he thinks that I have been expecting his call or waiting for his message. Right away, I am included. I am brought into his latest idea or given details of one of his student's most recent clever remarks or asked for my opinion. At the cottage in Mitaboni, he would crinkle the candy wrapper into the microphone when we were recording our conversations and make some comment about wanting to make my transcriptions more interesting. One day, during the lunch hour, he went to the market to buy the ingredients for a salad. That night, he lovingly washed, bleached and washed again every leaf of a bunch of fresh spinach, the skin of tomatoes and the flesh of carrots. He invited me to create a lime cordial and pepper dressing for his masterpiece, an inclusion that offered me my chance to be part of his gift. During one of his lessons during our previous time in Kenya, he was telling us all about the incredible courage it takes for each of us, for every teacher, to walk into a classroom. He told us that he envisioned the 'cloud of witnesses' from the book of Hebrews in the New Testament as being all of the teachers in the entire world who are now in heaven looking down and cheering us on as we walk through that

classroom door every morning. He actually has them pictured as standing on their lofty place, doing 'the wave' for each of us. Ken had us go outside of the classroom and, together— all 45 of us Kenyan and Canadian accomplished and educated adults, had us stand in a circle, and do 'the wave' so that we could feel the encouragement deep and we could practice our turn to cheer on one another. I could not help but rejoice in the knowledge that Ken has been part of my cloud of witnesses for so many years. Because of Ken, I am from great joy and deep fun and I teach with Ken's smile upon me.

I save her e-mails because, when Dana writes, she always says something encouraging, something to remind me to keep at it and to not be disheartened. She knows what she is talking about. A few years ago, I watched in awe as Dana faced one of the most painful experiences I think any one can possibly have. Not only did she face it, she named it, she shared it and she honoured it. Pain can be honoured. With her decision to come to Kenya, I was given a chance to live alongside that courage and that strength for a time. I remember the Sunday we were all at church together in Kenya and one of the ministers held a baby who was just a little younger than her son Caleb. Her tears let us all know just how much she was missing him, how far away she felt from him. And, when we were in class with our Kenyan colleagues, I remember Dana trying to pronounce Caleb's name the way our Kenyan friends said it. It was as if she was trying to capture all of the warmth and gratitude and kindness and enjoyment that our Kenyan friends gave so freely to us in the sound of his name so that she could again name the joy that Caleb is to her. The intensity with which she felt her missing for both Caleb and for Grant was matched with a full and genuine entrance into the experience of being with her teacher colleagues. Because of Dana, I am from attentive care and open spirit and I teach with Dana's embrace of all of life.

When I hear from Larry, he always has a question for me. He wonders whether or not I have heard if Mary's health is better or if Janet has been able to visit the teachers in their schools or if Karanja has found a principal for the school or if I have been able to raise any funds for there to be a second cohort of Kenyan teachers to enroll in the professional development program. Larry too entered into the lives of our Kenyan friends and into ours, into mine. His presence in Mitaboni eased so many of the anxieties that came from being far from home. He knew how to use the little water heater in the bathroom and mopped the cottage floor and tried to figure out which kind of singing the Kenyan music reminded him of – Polynesian or Hawaiian. He was the one who asked our Kenyan colleagues the detailed questions of their day – how far they have to walk to get to school, how they manage the resources they do have, what they have for and where they eat their lunch. His curiosity and alertness and helpfulness made life in Mitaboni normal somehow. These new friends are teachers and parents – people just living their lives the best they know how, people just like us. Being with our Kenyan colleagues was about delighting in the little differences and about celebrating what is shared. Because of Larry, I am from common places and I teach with the comfort of the familiar and an invitation to wonder about the differences.

Whenever I call or whenever I hear from Wendy, she will always ask about when it is that we are able to get together. Talking on the phone or chatting by e-mail is good

but sharing a meal and being together is so much better. That Sunday in that church service in Kenya when Dana cried tears of missing, Wendy cried tears of connection. My husband Gary led us, led the whole worshipping congregation, in prayer that morning and having him, her friend for so many years, her friend who was no longer part of her everyday community, again enter into her life with care and intimacy, connected her once more to herself as friend. Wendy offered us Canadian and Kenyan teachers the same gifts. As she stood at the front of the classroom during the very last class to say good-bye from all of us, she led us in a kind of prayer for she, with care and intimacy, read us a story. She held the book, one that she had chosen to bring especially, to her side in her left hand angled outward for all to see. She read the words on each page slowly and clearly with the hope that we would recognize the gifts that she was offering to us. She made sure that each of us was able to capture the reverence and delight emanating from the illustrations. And there, in that room, she pronounced to us a benediction of blessing as she gifted us with story. Because of Wendy, I am from precious intention and I teach in the full knowledge that sacred relationships are at the center of it all.

II. 'Coming to See' Retold

Perhaps this whole project with the Kenyan teachers and this whole research inquiry is part of that decision I made long ago, that conversion of sorts, to become one who sees. It is as if our 'stories to live by' direct us and motivate us to be in our worlds a certain way – and this is why they are our 'stories to live by.'

I remember my very first trip outside of North America. I was in my first year of university, just after high school, and my Dad wanted us to go on a warm holiday in the middle of the Saskatchewan winter, and, he wanted to go and see. We went to one of the Caribbean islands and navigated life in between the tourist world and the everyday life of those who called the island home. We sat on the beach for a while and then we hopped on to one of the van-like public buses and headed inland. It was my first time of having to hold a live chicken on my lap while riding a bus. We wandered in the tourist kiosks and then we paid a visit to relatives of mutual friends. We by-passed the package tours and planned a way to visit a community project instead. We always went to church. Together we went to see.

In Mitaboni, I saw the dissecting trays. I saw them as they sat in the cardboard box on the desk in the corner of the cottage and I saw them in the matatu bus sitting on Charles' lap. I wonder if I will ever get the opportunity to see them being used by the students in the school in Kenya near the Somalia border. I wonder when I will next see such joy.

In Mitaboni, I saw incredible teaching. These four friends of mine did all that teachers are supposed to do – prepare lessons, be masters of their content, get to know their students, engage the learning process and evaluate their students' learning. But they did more than this. They are more than this. They entered in with their whole selves – their knowledge, their spirits, their stories, their lives. I wonder when I will next see such brilliance.

In Mitaboni, I saw expressions of faith – some genuine and others not as much so. I am still trying to figure out how it is that I determine which is which. I think it depends on what I see. I will keep looking.

As we left Mitaboni, I saw my home in a new way. Some of what I thought gave me a sense of home, did not. The familiar became strange perhaps because the strange had become familiar. There I was in the borderlands, again needing to decide which way to look.

Seeing is not just observing. It is not just watching from a distance. Seeing, really seeing, allows me to feel and to question and to think and to decide. Seeing requires more than just my eyes. It requires all of me. Seeing the dissecting trays sitting on Charles' lap, seeing my friends hold their welded signs, seeing the responses of all of us to the Evangelist, and seeing life in Amsterdam, is about me coming to see me in my world. I will keep my eyes wide open.

III. 'Knowing the Borderlands of My World' Retold

I know that when I saw Charles holding that box of dissecting trays, I was witnessing pure delight. He did not expect to receive such a gift. He was the picture of anticipation as he allowed himself to revel in the thought of being able to present those trays to his students, to his colleagues. He was another one who benefited from the way Ken is in his world, the way Ken lives because of the faces he has. I know that my world has faces that I have not yet seen. I am one who wants to live so as not to miss them when they come my way.

I know that when Ken and I gave Dana, Larry and Wendy their welded signs, I could hardly contain my joy. The signs were so tacky and so clumsy and yet so ... Mitaboni. There we were, at Haandi. *It is this classy restaurant that is known worldwide for its incomparable Indian cuisine. White linen tablecloths and napkins. Servers in tuxedos. Candlelight and music. And out of my bag I pull the welded signs – the emblems of the borderlands. I know that my world is often misguided in what it considers precious. I am one who wants to taste the richness of gratitude with every spoonful of experience.*

I know that when the Evangelist started to preach, I wanted to hide. I did not want to be associated with any such scripted and choreographed performance of the Christian faith. I wanted him to stop ranting and yelling. I wanted him to step out of the caricature he was acting, to step down off that platform and to step carefully into people's lives. I wanted him just to tell his story – the story of his past and his family, of how he came to embrace faith and of how he wants to be in this world. I wanted him to take the time to see and to hear and to embrace the people of Mitaboni. I know that my world often tries to bully people into faith. I am one who wants to live faith genuinely and attractively – to live it with invitation.

I know that when we were in Amsterdam I saw dimensions of my world that make me ache. I saw people hurting and being hurt. I saw people using and being used. I saw people mistreating and being mistreated. I saw people not being themselves – their sacred selves, their dignified selves. I couldn't help but be confronted with the truth that this is part of my world and, if I am one who desires to see, that I had to look. I must first acknowledge what I then desire to change. I know that my world gets awfully mixed up sometimes. I am one who wants to help figure it out.

IV. 'Leaning into Life' Retold

Anthony started to sing. The Kikamba words drifted out of his mouth from some place deep within. The tones were full, the melody, haunting. It started softly and rhythmically, chant-like. He sang a verse and the teachers echoed, antiphonal harmonies filling the tune's simplicity – another verse and another echo. With each verse, the sound became stronger. And with each verse the teachers bowed more deeply. The song, you see, was a call to reverence, a call to life. Each verse called some of God's creatures to come and bow before Him. World – come bow before Him. Countries – come bow before Him. Stars – come bow before Him. Seas – come bow before Him. Brothers – come bow before Him. Sisters – come bow before Him. Teachers – come bow before Him. And then, Carla, yes, Anthony sang, Carla – come bow before Him. And there I was, leaning into life again.

'Like Mitaboni'

During our meeting in November, we together realized that, by taking the time to sit around in one of our living rooms, by pulling out a few snacks, and by me having my tape recorder close at hand, our evening was just like being in Mitaboni. I made the comment, rather off-handedly, that "this is a little piece of Mitaboni, right here (laughter)" (Group Conversation, November 19, 2001). We all realized that we were missing our together time, time to talk about our lives as teachers and our continued attempts at figuring out life on our educational landscapes.

Wendy could not be at our meeting. So, we called her in Hamilton by phone. We heard Ken say into the receiver, "In fact, about half an hour ago, because Dana and I have both stopped, Carla said, 'this is like Mitaboni.' Sit around and actually talk to people. Have conversation. Well, when the budget is all there, we will pay for you to be at our next meeting" (Group Conversation, November 19, 2001). 'Like Mitaboni' became our evening's chorus.

Ken connected Mitaboni to having conversations about education – what we are doing and why we are doing it. He is discovering that it is possible to have good conversations in places other than Mitaboni.

> Some colleagues of mine and I, four or five guys meet every year at teachers' convention day and we have a lunch over at one of these bank towers. We end up

talking about education. We don't have any prep or any marking with us and so we have all been in a session that morning. It inevitably gets broader. We are not griping about the principal or the union or anything. We just talk about education and vocation and so on. So I think that it is possible in Canada. You just have to get away from preparing for tomorrow. Usually these teachers' conventions are on a Friday and we don't have to literally prepare for tomorrow and we take a day off and think about education. So it is possible here (Individual Conversation, September 17, 2001).

The conversation about this actually started when we were still in Mitaboni. This is how some of it went.

Ken: "I want to make a comment now. Dana, you made a comment earlier about reflecting theologically about education. Last night, 24 hours ago, I was sitting in this seat thinking, 'in the rush of grading and preparing and so on, I almost never have a conversation about education with my colleagues.' We talk about so and so and what is going to happen that day. We never have a chance to actually theorize or think about what we do. I love this. This is why I keep coming to this place. If I could have this discussion in Edmonton, I wouldn't even come here. To find teachers who would actually sit around for an evening. … We have a practical task but it dips in and out of a whole bunch of things – how we are doing personally and educational theory and politics and all that. Last night I thought, 'I can't believe this! I am sitting here with four teachers talking about education.'"

Wendy: "This is what I miss about Edmonton. I had that community at church and also with my colleagues at my schools. And because I started off going to the University of Alberta, I developed some friendships there and those took me to other schools and other professional organizations."

Ken: "I don't get to do this at work. This is what I miss about academic work. Instead, I am a secondary teacher and these moments are rare – coffee time and teacher convention day. Every November I get a lunch where we talk about education where we are not griping about one student or trying to solve an immediate problem."

Group: "That's true, yea."

Ken: "I think, 'isn't this wonderful.' Being able to come here and have five nights of discussion. This year it is ten nights!"

Larry: "At teachers' convention, we usually talk about the shopping. That's what it usually is for me. People steer away from education things, but that's another topic."

Ken: "I go to sessions but I have lunch with colleagues and we talk about what we heard that morning. Maybe I am in an exceptional school, this school that was independent for so long had really lousy conventions. But now, we get to go to the Edmonton district convention. We think that it is just like being at a banquet. Maybe you are with old cranks who have been to too many."

Larry: "Exactly."

Ken: "For us this is still wonderful. We have only been in the ATA for three years. It is like a truckload of Christmas presents got dumped into our yard accidentally."

Larry: "I got to the point where I didn't want to go at all."

Ken: "Well, for me, thanks you guys. I'll buy you all little stick man with a spear at the end (laughter)" (Group Conversation, August 22, 2001).

Wendy had also made a connection to a home experience feeling "'like Mitaboni' all over again." She made it when I was asking her what it was like to have Ken call her in Hamilton, from Edmonton, to clarify a particular teaching method that he wanted to use in his class the next day.

> It felt like Mitaboni all over again (laughter). Only I wish we could have discussed it face to face and not be so far away. It was cool. It was exciting to think that he was committed to that and trying new things and I think he said that he has four or five years left of teaching. And I think there are teachers on my staff who have that far to go and they are just coasting. They are just burying their head and saying, 'I am just going to get through this. I am going to do what I have always done.' I thought it was really exciting for someone to say, 'I am going to do this and my students are going to benefit and I am going to benefit from new learning' (Individual Conversation, October 13, 2001).

Wendy described our time in Mitaboni this way.

> Our evening time in the cottage felt like family. It was safe and caring and a place where you could take lots of risks. For me it was comfortable to know Dana as well as I did and just to be able to ask her about things and work together on things and not feel like I had to be somebody brilliant but I could just take risks with her and say, 'what do you think?' and 'what's your idea?' I think that is the kind of thing we all wish for in our school environments is to have colleagues with whom we can be open and plan and work things out together rather than feel we have to be the expert and hide behind our closed doors. We could be very open and share things openly about what we know and what we think works and where we feel like our failures are and get input from other people. Those two weeks felt like that was that kind of environment. These were people that we could trust and learn and grow with and just be open with. That was really refreshing (Individual Conversation, January 22, 2002).

For Wendy, 'like Mitaboni' was about experiencing something even deeper.

> I think we were all glad to get back to Mitaboni after being in Nairobi for the week-end. Nairobi was sort of hustle and bustle. It was fun. We did lots of fun things and did shopping but it was good to get back to a quieter pace. I think we all enjoyed being out in the country and being away from all of that. And maybe it had something to do with that sacred and secular divide again. Maybe we felt more in touch with the sacred in Mitaboni and Nairobi sort of took us back to

> more like the life we lead at home because it was fast-paced and busy. And we did a lot of shopping which was fun but it was taking us to the material again. So being at the cottage and being with the teachers sort of took us back to being in touch with the sacred side of our lives and gave us an opportunity to rise above all of that and to be helpful and to give to somebody else and to take time to reflect. Maybe that is what WWWD is too. In a sense, [Carla] and Ken were poking fun at Larry putting WWJD on the chalkboard. I think to me it seemed a bit trite and that redeemed it. [The welded signs are] saying that we have all lived life and that we all hopefully make wise decisions on what we know and on what our past experience is and, if you will, the person that God has made us to be rather than always having to go outside of that to ask 'What Would Jesus Do?' in a situation. It is more, what has Jesus enabled me to do? And me being able to rise to that challenge (Individual Conversation, January 22, 2002).

Larry agreed with our group's consensus that sitting in that living room on that November evening was like being in Mitaboni. And he was still hoping for an opportunity to go back. Being in Mitaboni was a chance to have some focus on his own reasons for being a teacher. "As Dana was saying, I have never really thought in terms of my faith and my teaching. Well, I have but not to this degree. To focus on it for a whole week has been great. To focus on how faith permeates our whole lives" (Group Conversation, August 22, 2001).

Larry also told us about a moment he had recently had when he had walked into the office at his church. "It was really neat. I went into the office and here is this picture of all these people from Carey Theological College and from Mitaboni – Sister Grace and Karanja. Wow, that picture never meant anything to me before and suddenly there are all these people that I know" (Group Conversation, November 19, 2001).

Dana arrived at that November living room meeting a little late. She and Grant and Caleb had just returned from Jasper the night before and she was scrambling to get some things together for the book project that she and Ken were working on. She recalled that Mitaboni was "a different pace of life. This is probably one of the first times that I have sat around since we got back." We asked her why she had not brought her knitting. She replied, "I should have brought it. I am still working on the same cardigan (laughter)" (Group Conversation, November 19, 2001).

It seems to me that we will never tire of having and we will continue to be surprised by more moments from the borderlands, more moments 'like Mitaboni.'

Chapter Seven:
WIDER REVERBERATIONS

When people have asked me what my research is about, I have tried to offer them a short précis of the narrative inquiry, what Wendy called the 'elevator version.' I have said that my study is about the formation of our identities, of the five of us who participated in the study. It is about how experience is educative, how it shifts 'stories to live by.' I tell them about being able to go to Kenya with some teacher friends of mine and that my research is about trying to understand how the experience of encountering something so new has influenced our identities. Some people leave it at that. Others respond with intrigue: so what have I learned and how does it all connect with teachers? My hope in this last chapter is to respond to these queries by reflecting on the wider reverberations they create.

Narrative Contributions to Identity Formation

This study has demonstrated a narrative understanding of identity. Based on the orienting discussion presented in Chapter Two, this narrative understanding is not necessarily at odds with perspectives on identity formation from other social science disciplines. It may even enhance the other perspectives by functioning as the junction and the bridge through which other concerns can be brought to light (Gilroy, 1996, p. 225).

Formation, as presented at the beginning of Chapter Five, can be conceptualized as the series of shifts in our identities that take place over time as we experience life encountering our worlds. Intentional, healthy and desired formation requires an attentiveness and wakefulness that is at the very heart of narrative inquiry. I repeat the quotation offered earlier to emphasize this point.

> We retell our stories, remake the past. This is inevitable. Moreover, it is good. To do so is the essence of growth and, for Dewey, is an element in the criteria for judging the value of experience. Dewey's reconstruction of experience (for us the retelling and reliving of stories) is good in that it defines growth. Enhancing personal and social growth is one of the purposes of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 85).

Given this study's successful rendering of a narrative understanding of identity formation, a question that arises for me is this: Had I situated this study in a puzzle posed by a particular psychologist or theologian, for example, would I have been able to recognize the shifts that took place in the identities of the five of us because of our experience in the borderlands that was generated by our time in Kenya? This question is posed not because I need to smooth over any intellectual sense of dissonance. Nor is it because I cannot live with ambiguity and partial understanding. But, because of this study, I have encountered new understanding, learning that has shifted me, my embodied

knowledge. This question indicates the next step in my continued wonderings about how it is that I come to know who I am and who others are in my worlds.

The answer to the question is, of course, dependent on which psychologist and which theologian. It is not possible to speak of the psychological, nor the theological perspective. The spectrum of understanding is too wide even within each discipline. A Freudian analysis, an Eriksonian case history or a constructivist rendition in light of Kegan of each of Ken, Dana, Larry, Wendy and I would have certainly focused on and exposed aspects of each of our lives that have not been mentioned in this study. But the narrative descriptions offered of each of the five of us has made explicit that the nature of identity is a reflexive one: the context shapes the identity at the same time as the identity shapes the context. Perhaps narrative inquiry's three-dimensional space can be understood as mirroring the dynamics of identity formation: interaction with self and other in context over time. Narrative perspectives recognize and revere this on-going formative nature of self-hood.

The study permits me to conclude that the psychological and theological perspectives on identity formation need not be antithetical to, nor dissonant with, narrative understandings. Ken, Dana, Larry, Wendy and I are living, at once, stories that are and are not our own. We each "inhabit a character" (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 191) by which we are known by others and we each go about embodying these characters in our worlds. As teachers, we bring these characters with us into the worlds of our classrooms. Our 'stories to live by' can perhaps be considered the "mundane" stories of our lives (Crites, 1971, p. 296), both echoing the sanctity of the grander story that, from a theological perspective, is shared.

I began this research project believing that personal identities do change over time through the encounters people have with each other and their worlds. The study provided a venue in which to witness the identities of Ken, Dana, Larry, Wendy and I shift because of a unique experience in the borderlands. Our identities shifted over time, changes we came to see in the telling and living, the retelling and the reliving of our stories. Would we have been able to witness these shifts had we situated the question in a theoretical puzzle of another social science discipline? My answer to this is, maybe, even, probably. But, of even more interest and delight to me, is that I was able to study our experience of going to Kenya narratively and I am able to assert that, indeed, our experiences do have the potential to change who we are.

Teacher Identity in Teacher Education and Development

Another question I have come to think about because of this study is that of the significance of teacher identity to the educational enterprise. Why ought teachers be aware of and attentive to their shifting identities as well as to experiences that have the potential to change who they are? And, if this is so crucial, where does this fit with teacher education and development programs?

When one chooses to define oneself as a teacher, one chooses, consciously or unconsciously, a life of relationships with students and colleagues situated in specific social, cultural and political contexts that will continuously offer them the opportunity to change and to redefine who they are. Vinz (1996) explains that to know oneself as a teacher, one must first examine the assumptions one holds from past experiences so that a new text can be created. "Becoming a teacher is a continuous process and one through which a teaching identity is produced and reproduced through the particular social interactions and ideologies that inform us" (p. 6). Vinz continues to clarify this process when she explains:

> Learning to teach obviously involves coming to grips with identity as a teacher. I'm not suggesting this is a steady progression of coming to 'Know Thyself.' Rather, constant examination of one's identity is triggered by various classroom events, students, or colleagues who challenge teachers to consider or monitor their own actions and reactions. ... Teachers' identities are always in the making – an identity derived through the flux of experience in continual dialogue with a face-to-face encounter with self (p. 73).

One reason teachers need to be encouraged to be attentive to how their experiences are shifting who they are is therefore because, by monitoring our own actions and reactions, we gain a personal sense of confidence. The process that Vinz describes and that the five of us lived in our experience in the borderlands is a process which illuminates our embodied knowledge. It is a process of becoming centered and anchored in the abilities and expertise we bring with us into the classroom. It is a process in which our identities are exposed, reconsidered, maybe even questioned, and then affirmed and reinforced in a way that characterizes more closely the people we desire to become. Ken has gained the confidence to continue becoming a really good teacher and to put his theoretical understanding of encountering difference to the test of life situations and real people. Dana has gained the confidence to enter into other people's lives and her own tensions with more curiosity and centeredness. Larry has gained the confidence to know that the values he has lived in his teaching career will continue to shape the next chapter of his life. Wendy has gained a sense of confidence in coming to know that the living of her 'stories to live by' influences others, both professionally and personally. And I gain confidence in believing that the knowledge I hold in my 'stories to live by' is worth living and telling in my school context because I choose to live with a willingness to question and therefore a willingness to shift.

Life in schools for the five of us, and perhaps for all teachers, in these times is one in which the once remote political decisions have infiltrated the classroom. It is also one in which professional standards are being reduced to measurable skills and techniques. Society's dominant message to teachers is that, because we have all spent time in schools, anyone can do the job. It is as if 'teaching' and 'profession' do not belong in the same sentence. In a time when the political and the professional dialogues are deafening, the teachers' sense of the personal must be reinforced and made visible to themselves and others. Personal knowledge needs to be intentionally interwoven into and through the political mandates and the professional expectations that are being voiced to teachers.

Doing this begins with a renewed sense of trust in the identities I hold and choose to continue developing. Confidence means 'with trust.' By undertaking the process of learning about ourselves through encountering the borderlands in our every day worlds, we gain a new level of confidence in the knowledge we embody.

Secondly, intentionally attending to our formation is a matter of integrity. Palmer (1998) connects teacher identity with integrity in this way:

> By identity I mean an evolving nexus where all the forces that constitute my life converge in the mystery of self: my genetic culture in which I was raised, people who have sustained me and people who have done me harm, the good and ill I have done to others and to myself, the experience of love and suffering – and much, much more. In the midst of that complex field, identity is a moving intersection of the inner and outer forces that make me who I am, converging in the irreducible mystery of being human. Identity lies in the intersection of the diverse forces that make up my life, and integrity lies in relating to those forces in ways that bring me wholeness and life rather than fragmentation and death.... Identity and integrity can never be fully named or known by anyone, including the person who bears them. They constitute that familiar strangeness we take with us to the grave, elusive realities that can be caught only occasionally out of the corner of the eye (p. 13).

One way that teachers can bring a sense of "wholeness and life" to what they do in classrooms is for them to enter into the same process of growth that they desire for their students. Expecting students to make meaning from the educative experiences they encounter as they go about life in schools without expecting the same of one's self, is edging quite close to a hypocritical and dichotomous existence. I am not calling teachers hypocrites. I am suggesting that living such an inconsistency contributes to a sense of fragmentation and disillusionment. Living towards wholeness is a directional choice. It is a choice to see the borderlands that do exist in our every day landscapes and to address with intentionality the disruptions they can create in who we have come to be in our worlds.

Erich Fromm (1968) also connects identity with integrity.

> [I]dentity is the experience which permits a person to say legitimately "I" – "I" as an organizing active center of the structure of all my actual or potential activities. ...
>
> A concept which presupposes that of identity is that of integrity. It can be dealt with briefly because integrity simply means a willingness not to violate one's identity, in the many ways in which such violation is possible (pp. 82 – 84).

Fromm's perspective suggests that our identities are violated when they become a 'thing,' a process that he believes happens all too regularly in a technological society. When I consider how his comments apply to teachers, I can recognize how teachers in today's society are often pushed and even sometimes allow themselves to be reduced, to

'things,' to being the objects of educative experiences. A call to integrity is a call to the teacher's rightful place as subject – as an individual and as a person, whose identities are allowed to enter into, find expression and shifted by the educative experiences, the borderlands, as they emerge in their schools and classrooms.

I greatly respect and admire how Ken, Dana, Larry and Wendy are committed to the pursuit of integrity in their teaching lives. Ken lives the story he wishes for his colleagues. He wants them to engage some kind of borderland because of the richness he has discovered therein – a place of continued learning and freshness. Dana lives with integrity in the way that she chooses to live in the tensions. She does not smooth over the discrepancies she encounters nor does she let herself off the hook when a tension is revealed in her own life. Larry's and Wendy's integrity is shown in how they expect the same high standards of themselves as they do of others. For Larry, it is an expectation of teachers being change agents and, for Wendy, it is an expectation that all teachers ought to first be learners. For me, I am grateful for Dana and Wendy's affirmation that they see in me the desire to think through the intersection of my professional and faith commitments. Living consistently with the values inherent in each is how I understand integrity for myself.

Boomer's (1988) comment articulates a third reason for teachers to become intentionally attentive to their identity formation. He recognizes that, "when all the surface features are stripped away we teach profoundly what we are, what we know, what we value and what we believe" (p. 104). Teachers cannot not teach who they are: Teaching is relational. Every classroom takes on the ethos of the teacher. If teachers are not aware of some of the identities they bring with them into their classrooms, they will be unaware of key factors in the creation of the classroom environment, the learning dynamic and the interpersonal interactions – of both the helpful and the harmful contributions these factors may make.

Being in Kenya with Ken, Dana, Larry and Wendy allowed me a chance to be their student and I often think about how fortunate their students in Canada are to have them as teachers. They each are a composition of identities whose impact in their classrooms is more influential, honest and inviting because of their awareness of themselves. I am challenged by Ken's ability to push towards an ethical view of the world. I love being given Dana's attention to my learning process. I desire to live alongside Larry's curiosity of the world. And I relish the opportunity to make more sense of my life through the literary connections Wendy helps me make. These teachers are border crosser teachers – teachers who are committed to the continual learning about and development of their identities so that they can connect with others in their lives and in their classrooms who too have the possibility to change. I think of myself as a border crosser teacher as well – one who wishes to see and to know and to lean into life.

If the field of teacher education were to take seriously an attention to teacher identity (not that there are not some professors and programs which already do), to the development of border crosser teachers, then teacher education, both pre-service and in-

service modes, would recognize the importance of education as reconstruction, not injection (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000).

> We use this metaphor to express the idea that, as teacher knowledge grows, it does so by composing and recomposing the knowledge that is already there. Education, in this view, is a process of rethinking the past with new external knowledge, theory and experience. In teacher education as reconstruction, which is based on the notion of teacher knowledge, a person can never escape their past. Our views on this owe much to Dewey (1938[a]) who saw education as a reconstruction of experience. From a teacher knowledge point of view, teacher education progresses by reconstructing knowledge and not, primarily by addition, accumulation or accretion of knowledge (pp. 101, 102).

Conceiving of teacher education programs as focusing on either the injection or the reconstruction of knowledge is Connelly and Clandinin's way of delineating the difference between what have become the most common emphases in teacher education and that which they hope will become a more accepted practice.

Beyer (2000) highlights Young's study (1996) in order to speak of the difference in another way. Young compared the graduates of two teacher education programs – one from what she labelled as a 'Foundations College' and the other a 'Methods College.' Graduates from the 'Methods College'

> uncritically accepted 'everyday reality in schools' while concentrating 'on finding the most effective and efficient means to achieve ends and to solve problems that have been defined for them by others.' They rarely examined the purposes and ends toward which they were working nor considered the educational, social, and political contexts in which their teaching would be embedded. ... [The graduates of this college were], quoting Dewey, 'submerged in the routine details of their callings' and generally displayed evidence of 'intellectual subservience' that left them for the most part uncritical of the prescribed 'educational gospel' (pp. 152, 153).

Graduates from the 'Foundations College' embodied values and perspectives on teaching that were markedly different.

> [These teachers] walked into the classroom as thoughtful, alert, insightful, and reflective students of education who had to struggle with some of the immediate practical tasks but who still possessed the 'power to go on growing'. Their grasp of the historical and cultural underpinnings of the educational system provided 'a significant counter-framework for envisioning what is possible rather than simply accepting what is probable' (p. 156).

Young's study (1996) illuminates Beyer's (2000) analysis of the current state of teacher education in the United States. Unlike the 'new professionalism' being promoted there and elsewhere, abilities and commitments of teacher education graduates to

continue to think deeply and critically about the ends and means of education, the social, political and cultural contexts that shape schools, and the ways in which they continue to, will emphasize the following for future pupils:

> 'engaged activities' rather than 'performances'; 'social justice and moral action' rather than 'the imposition of standards'; 'social reconstruction' rather than 'the conventional social wisdom'; and 'inquiry into the means and ends of education' instead of an 'engineered consensus' (p. 40).

Beyer (2000) concludes by calling teacher educators to emphasize a kind of reflection that is

> both critical and contextual, considers options to the dominant values and cultures of the school, the university and other institutions, and collectively engages in a series of normative questions that require choices and actions. When this is done, faculty and students will regard themselves as people with agency who are able to think in new terms and to act in unconventional ways (pp. 40, 41).

In addition to Beyer's (2000) emphases, I desire to call teachers to a kind of reflection that alerts them to the borderlands that exist in the relationships they have with their students and colleagues in classrooms and schools. When this is done, teachers are able to regard themselves as people who bring with them valued and unique identities that continue to be shaped by the interaction, situation and continuity – by the experiences that exist on the educational landscape.

While experiences in the borderlands can never be mandated, fostering an openness to the possibilities the borderlands can offer is something that teacher education programs can promote. Ken, Dana, Larry, Wendy and I chose to enter into the professional development experience with the Kenyan teachers with this kind of openness and we discovered a context that welcomed our lives as they were and offered the possibility for our lives to shift. Ken and Wendy both told stories of how it is that they have entered and choose to enter into all professional development opportunities with this openness. Ken told the story of celebrating the lunches that he has once a year with colleagues when they discuss the learning that has been triggered from the annual teachers' convention. Wendy told the story of preferring smaller professional development opportunities in which she can create new collegial relationships. For Dana, the experience in the Kenyan borderlands helped her to recognize how she can choose to bring the totality of who she is into professional development experiences in her home context: She told the story of being at an in-service wherein the workshop leader used the biblical story of the Prodigal Son and how she was able to enter into it in a new way because of the leader's courage and her new attentiveness. Larry recognized that the professional development experiences he attended towards the end of his career did not foster the exploration of teacher identity and he regrets not having an experience like the Kenyan borderlands earlier in his career. And I am learning that the potential to make a professional development opportunity a borderlands experience requires something from both me and from it. It requires my attitude of openness towards the interruptions and

questions the opportunity may surface. And, the opportunity itself requires an attention to the creation of a safe context in which 'stories to live by' can be reconstructed.

Rathgen (2000) highlights my learning as she issues a similar plea to the ones extended by Young and Beyer. However, her plea for teacher education programs to focus on teacher identity is a plea to consider this emphasis as a directional orientation rather than as the either/or binary of Young's study (1996). Rathgen recognizes that beginning teachers need to feel the confidence that practical methods and specific skills provide. She suggests that this is where teacher education must begin but it must also intentionally move to explore the foundational issues embedded in our own experiences of schooling as well. The fears we hold and the anticipation we hope for are embedded in our own experiences of the teachers of our pasts. We bring these fears and hopes with us into our education programs and "asking student teachers to leave this knowledge behind is almost as difficult as asking a child to leave a favourite toy at home" (p. 203). These stories need to be uncovered and deconstructed.

> We have to teach on two levels at once, keeping both of the levels open and available for observation and self-aware critique. On one level we are exemplary tutors meeting the fear-full needs of students, inducting them in all that is required to become teachers – professionally, intellectually, emotionally and socially. On another level we must be disruptive teachers, undermining the teaching act by demystifying all the components of it, and making them transparent. Both the student teachers and we, ourselves, must have doubts about everything that we do. ... Teacher education needs to address what it means to change our minds, shift our opinions, develop different attitudes, and acknowledge how difficult this can be (pp. 201, 214).

Teacher education needs to foster the understanding that to "change our minds" and to "shift our opinions" and to "develop different attitudes" are positive steps. They are actions that are inherent to the very nature of who we are. Promoting successful teachers as being people who have accomplished their skill set and who have learned how to be good conduits of the system is fostering an attitude that distances teachers from their identities.

Scott and Freeman-Moir (2000) propose that the need for such a conceptualization of teacher education did not arise by accident. In their book, *Tomorrow's Teachers: International and critical perspectives on teacher education,* they trace the shifts in teacher education that have occurred since the end of World War II (p. 9). The goal of education, they say, is to assist society in reproducing itself across the generations (p. 7).

> We want the next generation to reproduce the society we have now, but to reproduce it slightly differently. We want it to be less racist or more fair, for example (p. 8).

However, the imperative that cuts across this process of reproduction is that, in western liberal democracies, "the movement from the past to the future is not secure, stable or evenly balanced" (Scott & Freeman-Moir, 2000, p. 8). During times of economic boom, the compatibility of work and education allow for widely, yet uncritically, accepted solutions to the reproduction challenge in which people are encouraged to pursue self-interest based individualism. But during times of economic crisis, people become defined in economic rather than, what he calls, psychological terms. I call them terms of identity.

> This economic view ushered in new accounts of the meaning and purpose of work and education. It brought new understandings of the skills and competencies people must have if life is to be reproduced, new versions of the curriculums and schooling systems required to halt the downward swing of recession and new balance sheets on the cost of everything. There came also a rethinking of the economics, purpose and methods of producing tomorrow's teachers (p. 10).

The goal for tomorrow's teachers continues to be the need to "secure human life for another generation" (Scott & Freeman-Moir, 2000, p. 10). But the challenge in the midst is for tomorrow's teachers to reach this goal without leaving behind the richness of the human spirit, without turning people from being "self-actualizers" to "rational utility maximisers" (p. 10). By paying attention to the shifting nature of teacher identities, we will have a greater chance that the reproductive shifts we desire in society will occur because teachers will be more committed to ensuring that the shifts take place – a commitment that comes from having been made aware of the benefit of the shifts that have occurred in their own 'stories to live by.'

Vinz (1996) echoes Scott and Freeman-Moir's (2000) urgent call for the need for attention to teacher identity formation in all discussions on teaching and learning.

> [W]e have devalued and constrained our own knowledge. Much of our experience provides wisdom for our future teaching lives and for others' lives as well. I want to stress that the stories of individual lives and the accompanying improvisations, as Catherine Bateson (1989) suggests, help us discover 'the shape of our creation along the way, rather than pursuing a vision already defined.' Particularized viewpoints and experiences of teachers haven't often been legitimated as central to understanding schools or teaching (p. xi).

The inquiry into life experiences – into memories of prior schooling or teaching, provides pre-service and in-service teachers "with insights through which they can develop theories about teaching and teachers' work" (Vinz, 1996, p. 6).

> Through this pedagogical choice, I hope to dislodge the notion that methods courses are about finding the right theory, method, content, or curriculum. My strategy is based on the belief that for all there is to learn from others about theory and pedagogy, it is impossible to talk about teaching without questioning personal beliefs and knowledge. I want prospective teachers to think about the images they

> carry with them. ... Reliving and reconceptualizing our experiences isn't just narcissistic, it's a way to effect new connections in experience and to see that what we set out to do has some underlying pattern, which sometimes needs to be challenged (pp. 6, 7).

Attention to teacher identity formation in teacher education and development programs will serve to help teachers search out our own significant questions (Vinz, 1996, p. 10). It "provides a distinct opportunity for the development of insights about teaching and can help us rethink our assumptions and beliefs" (p. 20). And, it recognizes that "teachers cannot become members of a knowledge community by adopting others' practices wholesale" (p. 10). Instead, "teachers should produce knowledge for one another" in hopes of creating "more images of teachers that help us rethink our ideas or imagine new practices, but will not try to convert us" (pp. 10, 11).

Vinz implores teachers to do what an experienced teacher told a group of novices, "Remember your stories. ... They can save your life a little at a time" (p. 277). After a year of practicing this advice, a first-year teacher reflected,

> I recognize how important it is for me to make sense of my past as a way of helping me cope with the present. One of the most important benefits is that I see myself in the process of becoming. I see that my inquiry needs to be continuous. Because I'm constantly changing, and each day in a classroom leads to new understandings, I can see myself thinking about what *could be* rather than *what is* (p. 20).

I implore teachers, not only to remember their stories, but as well to intentionally bring their stories with them into the lives of their students and colleagues in their classrooms and schools everyday. I encourage teachers to let their 'stories to live by' loose so that the ones that need to be changed can be. So that the ones that need to be affirmed might be. So that the ones that need to be reinforced or broadened have the chance to be. And so that the ones that have the capacity to call forth the 'stories to live by' of others have the freedom to do so.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) summarize succinctly and powerfully the basis for a teacher education that attends to teacher identity formation: "We believe the most 'critical' question in anyone's education is to determine the meaning of life's experiences" (p. 16). I have, with the gracious involvement of Ken, Dana, Larry and Wendy, demonstrated how it is that we made meaning of our experience in the borderlands that were generated by our trip to Kenya. We saw that the meaning we are able to construct from our life experiences is intimately connected to who we already are, the meanings we have already formed which are shown by how we are in our worlds. These are our 'stories to live by,' our identity. Identity: sameness and continuity, language and action, declaration and process, telling and living all in one. Identities are defined, are in the making and are situated within all of one's interactions with the surrounding familial, social, professional, political and cultural worlds.

The significance of understanding our teacher identities to education in general and to teacher education in particular is stated by Palmer (1998) when he writes, "Face to face with my students, only one resource is at my immediate command: my identity, my selfhood, my sense of this 'I' who teaches – without which I have no sense of the 'Thou' who learns" (p. 10). Teachers are a resource that deserves much greater attention. They are a resource that, in both the heightened insecurity of times of economic challenges or the lulled security of times of economic stability, can too easily be treated as agents of imposed agendas or be ignored all together. This study is another call to ensure that neither is the case.

It is my hope that because of this study, Ken, Dana, Larry, Wendy and I have a fresh and deeper understanding of who it is that we are bringing into our classrooms each day and, because of this new meaning, a fresh and deeper reverence for who it is that our students and colleagues are bringing as well. And, it is also my hope that this study has provided you, the reader, with the invitation to continue telling your 'stories to live by' so that you too are alert to how the experiences you encounter, wherever your borderlands are found, have the potential to shift and are shifting who it is that you are in your world.

Each of us sat up to the table. We had been in Mitaboni for a whole week and we had returned to Nairobi for the weekend for a break from the work, for the privilege of being tourists, for a shower, for a meal other than ugali. We had had a good sleep, a walk in the Arboretum, and a visit to a few shops. And now, we were sitting up to the white linen shrouded lunch table on the terrace at the Norfolk Hotel.

Sitting up to the table that day was like pulling up all of who we each were. We reached back to take hold of our chairs, and as we did, we grasped hold of every aspect of our whole selves that have developed and formed over our life times. With the clasp of our hands, we took hold of it all and brought it forward, swinging it up onto the table like the pendulum reaching its moment, like the priest swinging the incense. We put it all on the table: Every memory and every question; every wish and every worry; every student and every colleague; every hope and every story. We placed it all on the table as our offering, as our contribution to the feast.

That moment was the very cusp of our experience. It was the exact center of our time in Kenya – we had had one week of teaching and we had one more to go. And there we sat. Poised around that table in that place, we sat in awe of the rich banquet of identities that was spread before us. We had given our very selves for our selves and each other to see and to come to know. We had placed it all on the table. We had given it all up – given it to the acts of confession, examination and reconstruction. By doing so, we had entered in to the holy act of communion.

Communion is a risky venture and a glorious one. The risk of communion, of putting our whole selves on the table, is that we may not be able to put our selves back in the same way. The gift of communion, the glorious gift of putting it all on the table, is that we don't have to. Therein lies the essence of change.

EPILOGUE

Between the months of May and August 2002, I negotiated the research text with each of Ken, Dana, Larry and Wendy individually. This was a process of making certain that each were completely comfortable with the way I had narratively written about each of them. At the beginning of September, when all the negotiations were complete, I sent Ken, Dana, Larry and Wendy each a complete copy of the draft thesis. Until this point, they had only read the parts pertaining to themselves. At Jean Clandinin's suggestion, I included with each draft an invitation for each of them to respond to me by briefly writing about what their experience in the research project has meant to them. In effect, Jean and I want to give them the last word. What follows is the invitation I included with the draft copy of the thesis I sent and the responses I received from them in return.

> Dear Ken, Dana, Larry and Wendy:
>
> Here it is! How can I ever thank you enough for the way in which you have each entered so thoroughly into this research project. I am so privileged to have had you as research participants and, even more importantly to me, to continue to have you as friends. I will continue to offer you my thanks as we come to the conclusion of the research process, as we celebrate it together sometime soon, and as we continue to live with one another as friends even as the project fades and as new experiences engage our attention and intrigue.
>
> Jean, my supervisor, and I want to give you the last word on the research project – at least the last written word. I am sure that my examining committee will have a few things to say! We therefore invite you to send me a note once you have finished reading the draft thesis. We wish this to be an opportunity for you to say in your own words, in just a paragraph or two (without me narratively analyzing them!), what it has meant to you to have participated in the research project. I plan to include your responses in a section entitled *Epilogue,* which will be printed at the end of thesis.
>
> Thank you again,
> Carla

From Ken:

To reflect actively on teaching and my understanding of teaching as the Kenya Teacher Program evolved has been interesting and revealing. I'm not sure how my awareness that some conversations were taped changed what subjects arose, how long they lasted or what I said about them. The process has been interesting for several reasons, first, because of the experience and perspectives of the other people involved and the intentionality of the conversations. I have also found it interesting for the same reason I found it revealing: seeing and hearing my own perspectives on education described and enucleated by another person. The interviews, the conversations and the

reflections on them contained in this thesis all have led me to more reflective (and hopefully improved) practise in my own teaching.

From Dana:

More than a year later, my experience in Kenya continues to be a part of my life. I am reminded often of the sights, the sounds, the tastes, and the smells that I encountered there. More importantly, I think daily of the people I had the privilege of travelling and teaching with, Carla, Ken, Larry and Wendy; and of the people, my Kenyan colleagues, whom I had the honour of working with and getting to know. My WWDD sign and my letter from Benson, telling me I am loved by God and that he is using some of the strategies he learned during our course, are concrete reminders of my time in Kenya. They remind me of the important relationships that were forged, and of what I value in my life; my faith, my friends, opportunities to travel, and the importance of professional development in my life and in the lives of others.

Participating in this research project has been an enriching and rewarding experience. I loved the time Carla and I spent talking about Kenya, and about our lives before we met. We shared laughter and tears as we talked together and I am reminded of why I call her friend. I mill miss her regular visits to Edmonton. Participating in the Kenya project changed me. Participating in this research project has allowed me to clarify and articulate the change. I now better understand the connection between my faith and my work and can better articulate that connection to myself and to others. Reading Carla's telling of four of my stories to live by revealed a vulnerability I know I have, but try to hide. Looking at myself through Carla's eyes, I was at different times amazed, thrilled and uncomfortable with what she saw and knew about who I am. Carla struck home in her telling of my stories to live by, and in doing so, reminded me of who I am. Thank you, Carla.

From Larry:

Participating in this project has given me an opportunity for some "guided" introspection and review of why I teach/taught, and that has been quite interesting, especially to reflect back over a career and re-discover what motivated me to be involved in teaching in the first place. That comes down to wanting to be a change agent in the world, hoping to make it a better place. (Perhaps I have even done some of that!) This re-realization comes out of the questioning Carla did with me, and some of her insights which came out of what I said. Carla's "stories to live by" concept was interesting and it was instructive to read my own and those of my four colleagues, to see how they shaped us and our approach to teaching. They certainly do have a major impact on who we are as teachers, our goals and our relations with students. Basically, I'm glad to have been useful to Carla in getting her research done, and to have learned a bit more about my own motivations and those of others. There certainly are common themes among those motivations in teachers, which is probably someone else's thesis subject.

From Wendy: *Closing the Gaps*

At first, one might think that the trip to Kenya would emphasize the gaps between Canada and Kenya in terms of teachers' resources and training, but when I reflect on the trip what I am aware of now is the gaps within both the Kenyan and Canadian contexts. If we understand gaps to be about inequities then it strikes me that education is about closing the gaps. This is true from the individual level to the larger community level (such as family systems, employment possibilities, effecting social change). There are gaps not only between have and have-not schools and between supported and less-supported students, but also between skilled and less-skilled teachers. This is what makes teacher formation such a critical intervention for closing the gaps on both the individual level and the larger social level.

The Kenya trip offered two communities of teachers an opportunity to meet and share their commitment to addressing their students' gaps by developing their skills as teachers. It happened to come at a time when I was taking a more active role in professional development of teachers at my school. The conversations we had with the Kenyan teachers, but even more, the evening conversations among the five of us Canadian teachers, affirmed my conviction about the importance of teacher formation for closing the gaps. Moreover, the gaps between culture, gender, politics, economic status, religious commitments, etc., seemed far less significant when bridged by our mutual vocational call to teach and learn. I am grateful for this time with friends in the borderlands, for it has helped me shift from a personal commitment to professionalization to facilitating teacher formation in my Canadian school.

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Appendix A: RESEARCH CONSENT

Researcher: Carla Nelson, Dept. of Elementary Education, University of Alberta

Telephone: 780-488-1034 or 416-252-1531

E-Mail: GCNelson1@compuserve.com

Supervisor: Dr. D. Jean Clandinin, Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development, University of Alberta (780-492-7770 #290)

Title: Engaging Diversity: A Narrative Inquiry into the Borderlands of Cross - Cultural Professional Development

You have been invited to participate in a research study that explores the impact, if any, of a cross-cultural professional development experience on teachers' understanding of diversity. The University of Alberta requires that I must fully explain to you the details of the study, the terms of your involvement, and any expected risks and benefits before you sign the attached form and give your consent to participate. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or may withdraw from participation at any time during the study without jeopardy.

Purpose of Research:
The study is grounded in a belief that teachers teach who they are, what they believe, what they value and what they know – that is, their identity, their embodied knowledge. When I think about how teachers engage persons of a race, culture and ethnicity that is different from their own, I think they enter into these relationships with this totality of who they are. I am wondering about how this engagement may shift after teachers have had the opportunity to participate in a cross-cultural professional development experience. I invite you therefore into an intentional reflective and dialogical process of coming to understand how each of us know and think about colleagues and students who are of a race, culture or ethnicity other than our own in hopes of making our future relationships more just and democratic.

Methodology:
This research will use narrative inquiry. This methodology honours the relationships we will establish throughout the study by gathering the stories we have to tell ourselves and each other of how we have come to hold the meaning of diversity that we do and of how that meaning may be shifting as a result of the professional development experience. I am therefore asking that you be willing to be involved in individual – with me, and corporate – with the group, conversations which will be audio recorded. The number and length of meetings will be negotiated between us. As well, I am trying to think of additional ways to capture the richness of our experience and am wondering how you might feel about keeping a personal written journal or audio recording your thoughts on a

dictation machine or allowing me to see the postcards you write or the photographs you take. For the purposes of this consent form, I am asking that you agree to talk about this with me and with the group in order to determine together activities that are agreeable and suitable to you personally, to us as a group and to our Kenyan colleagues.

Risk Statement:
I know that you have already considered the risks associated with traveling to Kenya and have chosen to make this journey regardless of the study. One way for me to attempt to articulate the potential risks directly connected with the study independent of the risks associated with the travel is to offer you the following "wave" of questions that keeps surfacing in me in regards to my involvement in this research. As such, they target the emotional, psychological, intellectual and spiritual risks associated with encountering, in a new way, the worldviews we each hold.

Will I lose myself completely or will I find connections? Will I have any anchors or will I be like a kite in the wind whose string has broken? Will I be able to trust me or will I not know who I am? What can I possibly offer anyway? Will I make sense? Is my language too enculturated? Will we find enough common ground? How does teaching in luxurious Canada relate to teaching in non-luxurious Kenya? Will we dialogue? How, in Heaven's name, do counselling skills translate cross-culturally? Will this expose our indulgent culture? How will I defend it? Will I defend it? Will it expose me? Will I leave intact? Can I risk this? Why shouldn't I risk this? Am I being exploited? Am I exploiting them? Do they know how much I need them? Will they like me? Will being female be a factor? How will they see my whiteness? How do I see my whiteness? How do I see their blackness? How do they see their blackness? What if they disagree with me? Can I handle being wrong? How do I know that what I will teach is truth? Do I know anything as truth? Why me? Why now? Why not me? Why not now?

Anonymity or Named:
When I put the research into written form, I will need to refer to you in the text. I ask that you decide how this shall be done. You can choose to remain anonymous. If so, I guarantee that your responses will be treated with confidentiality and that I will use a pseudonym when referring to you. Or, you can choose to allow me to use your first name in the written text. Selecting this option indicates that you understand the risks associated with this decision.

Thank you for considering your involvement in the study. If any questions arise regarding this research or your participation in it either before or after you sign the attached form, please contact me or my supervisor (contact information supplied above).

Sincerely,
Carla Nelson

CONSENT FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

TELEPHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

I agree to participate in the study. I understand that I will participate in a series of audio recorded conversations as well as the possibility of additional activities yet to be decided by myself and the group.

(please circle one) **YES** **NO**

I wish to remain anonymous in the research. **YES** **NO**

I wish that my first name be used in the research. I understand the risks involved in using my first name.

YES **NO**

I give my permission for the research to be used beyond the dissertation project in presentations and in other forms such as academic journals.

YES **NO**

DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____